

A MODERN HISTORY OF MYANMAR

BURMESE
CLASSIC

1752 ~ 1948

Than Tun

M.A., B.L., Ph.D., D.Lit. (London)

A Modern History of Myanma [1752-1948]

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Our Three Main National Causes

- | | |
|---|-------------|
| Non - disintegration of the Union Cause | - Our Cause |
| Non - disintegration of the National Solidarity Cause | - Our Cause |
| Consolidation of National Sovereignty Cause | - Our Cause |

People's Desire

- * Oppose those relying on external elements, acting as stooges, holding negative views
- * Oppose those trying to jeopardize stability of the State and Progress of the nation
- * Oppose foreign nations Interfering in internal affairs of the State
- * Crush all internal and external destructive elements as common enemy

Four political objectives

- * Stability of the State, community peace and tranquility prevalence of law and order
- * National reconsolidation
- * Emergence of a new enduring State Constitution
- * Building of a new modern developed nation in accord with the new state Constitution

Four economic objectives

- * Development of agriculture as the base and all-round development of other Sectors of the economy as well
- * Proper evolution of the market-oriented economic system
- * Development of the economy inviting participation in terms of technical know-how and investments from sources inside the country and abroad
- * The initiative to shape the national economy must be kept in the hands of the State and the national peoples

Four social objectives

- * Uplift of the morale and morality of the entire nation
- * Uplift of national prestige and integrity and preservation and safeguarding of cultural heritage and national character
- * Uplift of dynamism of patriotic spirit
- * Uplift of health, fitness and education standards of the entire nation

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Author's Biography

Dr. Than Tun (1923-2005), Born on 6 April 1923 at Daungyi, Nagathaing-gyaung, Patheingyi district on the Ayeyawady delta. At the age of 15th he matriculated from the National High School in his native town. He earned the M.A. degree in History in 1950, the B.L. degree in 1952 from Rangoon (Yangon) University and the Ph.D. degree from University of London in 1956.

During the Japanese occupation 1942-45 he took part in the National Resistance Movement as the Secretary of the Ngathainggyaung Branch of the East Asiatic Youth League. In 1945, he was elected the first President of the Ngathainggyaung Branch of the Anti-Fascist Peoples' Freedom League and the President of All Burma (Myanmar) Students' Union in 1947. However, afterward, he abandoned political activities, to devote his life to historical studies.

He began his career as a parttime tutor at the History Department of Rangoon (Yangon), University in 1946. He was later promoted to assistantlecturer and lecturer, and served in this Department for 19 years. While serving as a lecturer at the Department of Oriental History of Rangoon (Yangon) University, he acted as the Editor of the Journal of the Burma (Myanmar) Research Society from 1958 to 1961, and the co-editor of the Bulletin of the Burma (Myanmar) Historical Commission during the period 1959-61. He contributed a number of valuable research papers in these two foremost academic journals published in Myanmar at the time. He was appointed as the Professor of History at Mandalay University in 1965 and worked for 17 years there. On 6 April 1983 he retired from the Myanmar Educational Service.

He left Myanmar and went to Kyoto University in Japan as a Research Fellow in 1982; he then worked as a Visiting Professor at Tokyo University of Foreign Studies till 1987. From 1987-90 he served as Visiting Professor at Northern Illinois University at Dekalb and Michigan University at Ann Arbor in the U.S.A. On 15 March 1990 he was awarded the D.Litt. degree by the University of London on the merit of editing and translating the Royal Orders of Burma (Myanmar), 1598-1885, in 10 volumes, published under the auspices of Kyoto University, with the financial support of the Toyota Foundation of Japan, and for many other important works on the history of Myanmar.

After returning from abroad he was appointed Member of the Myanmar Language Commission in 1991. He was also acted as Emeritus Professor in the newly established Department of Archaeology in 1993 and Emeritus Professor at the History Department in 1996, of Yangon

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University. In 2000, he was selected as a Laureate of the 11th Fukuoka Asian Culture Prize 2000 in the Academic Prize Category.

As a leading historian, besides one of the most eminent historians of Myanmar history, his research works are varied and cover many fields. Some of his well-known works in English are *History of Buddhism in Burma (Myanmar) A.D. 1000-1300 (1956)*, *The royal Orders of Burma (Myanmar), A.D. 1598-1885 (vol.i-x) (1983-90)*, *Essays on the History of Buddhism of Burma (Myanmar) (1988)*, *Buddhist Art and Architecture (2002)*, *Some Observations on History and Culture of Early Myanmar (2005)*.

At the age of 83, He passed away suddenly while visiting his former Department of History in Mandalay University on 30 November 2005.

Introduction

It is true that Myanma has their own system of making a Calendar and reckoning time but we prefer using the Julian Calendar until 14 September 1752 and the Gregorian Calendar afterwards in dating the Myanma history because we would like to compare events here against developments elsewhere and know or gauge our own progress as to how far we were ahead in some aspects, or how much we lagged behind time in such things like explorations and economic expansions through industrialization. In looking at Myanma politics in the international context we find the following:

The last decade of Aniruddha's reign coincides with the first decade of William I's rule in England. It means that while Bagan's control over the Myanma plains was firmly established, the Britons were conquered by foreigners called Normans whose control they never could shake off. The idea that every bit of land in the country belongs to the king prevailed in both countries though in Myanma the king had no control whatsoever on the religious land. The beginning of the Modern Age was seen in Europe in the 15th century together with several states asserted their national entity with separation from the Papal Church. In Myanma more closer contact between the Order of Buddhist Monks in Srilanka was made with that of Ramannadesa to make monasticreorganization on 24 February 1480 by King Ramadhipati, popularly known as Dhammazedī.

Vasco de Gama rounded the Cape of Good Hope on 22nd November 1496 and that somehow or other brought closer contact with Europe and Southeast Asia. Persian seamen were trading in the Indian Ocean from the 11th century and Myanma probably got for example Arak (distilled liquor) from them among others, in the 16th century. On 4 March 1510 Albuquerque annexed Goa for Portugal and mercenaries from Goa found their service under Myanma kings. Eventually guns and cannons were introduced in battles in Myanma.

The Chinese knew about using gunpowder for incendiary weapons by the 11th century. The formula for making explosives was brought by Arabs to Europe in the 13th century. At the end of the first quarter of the 14th century, knowledge of guns was fairly widespread. In the middle of the 16th century the musket appeared. The matchlock musket was cheap and easy to make and it required little maintenance. The Portuguese came to India and went further until they reached Japan in 1542. They came with the matchlock guns and soon a village blacksmith in India could fashion a matchlock with ornate native designs for decoration. In China, Thailand and Myanma, crude hand cannons were manufactured from the 16th to the 19th century. The wheel lock gun was known from about the end of the 15th century.

King Narapati II (popularly known as Shwe Nan Kyawt Shin) died of a cannon shot on 28 March 1527. The Shan took Ava and Sohanbwa became King of Ava. It was not a coincidence that Myanma nationalism was heightened at that time. When Sohanbwa told Min Gyi Yan Naung who was his Myanma advisor, that he would fight and take Pyay and Taung U, Min Gyi Yan Naung persuaded him to wait for some time, because he thought "Pyay and Taung U might

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became an easy prey. When they fell Myanma would have no chance to survive". He sent secretly messengers to Pyay and Taung U to send envoys with plenty of gifts to negotiate peace with Sohanbwa. In the meanwhile he led a conspiracy and Sohanbwa was assassinated on 13 May 1542. This helped the Myanmas control of the plains later by Tabin Shwe Hti who had his centre in Bago. After Tabin Shwe Hti was assassinated on 21 May 1551 during a drunken spree with a Portuguese companion, the Portuguese mercenaries helped Bayin Naung to conquer Bago on 12 March 1552 and later to make expeditions north and conquer Momeik on 10 January 1557, Monhyin on 6 March 1557 and Mogaung on 26 March 1557. It was during these expeditions that Bayin Naung (later known as Sin Byu Shin) converted the Shans to Buddhism.

During that year 1557, the Portuguese settled at Macao. In 1579 they started a trading station in Bengal. Subsequently Tanyin (Syriam) became another Portuguese port in the Bay of Bengal from about 1603 until 1613. Between 15 November 1577 and 30 November 1580, Francis Drake circumnavigated the world. Potatoes were first introduced into Europe in 1584. Akbar invaded India, annexed Kashmir in 1587, conquered Orissa in 1590 and Sind in 1592. He started campaigns in Deccan in 1599.

The Dutch began to colonize the East Indies and Sunda Islands in 1595. Meanwhile King Nyaung Yan acceded the throne of Ava on 13 February 1600 and it was the beginning of the consolidation of Myanma power again. The English East India Company was established on 31 December 1600, the Dutch East India Company on 20 March 1602 and the French East India Company in 1604.

The Dutch ejected the Portuguese from Moluccas in 1602. They were also ejected from Tanyin on 28 March 1613 when de Brito, Portuguese chief at Tanyin was executed by order of King Anaukpetlun. Myanma English relations were based, perhaps, for Myanma to get foreign arms and ammunition, because Myanma was engaged in the throes of war. Supply of arms to both parties of the contest was considered as treachery and perhaps this led to the "Tragedy of Negrais" on 6 October 1759. All these instances are given here just to make obvious the fact that however Myanma tried to isolate itself from outside contact from time to time, it was inevitable that it abided with the times more or less by the march of world events.

National Unification

Alung-mintaya (1752 - 1760)

Alaung-mintaya was born on 24 August 1714 in a village of three hundred small houses which was known as Moksobo. Alaung-mintaya was born from the family of landed gentry and many of his ancestors were Myothugyis. He claimed his descent from Monyin-mintaya of Ava (1427-1440).

At thirty six years of age, he was made a hereditary Lord of Moksobo and the surrounding places. Soon after that the Mons captured Ava on 22 March 1752. Against the counsels of his parents and uncles Alaung-mintaya decided to raise the standard of rebellion. People from forty six villages joined him and when a small detachment of Mons came to administer the oath of allegiance, he was ready for resistance. The detachment was ambushed on 20 April 1752 in the jungle to the south of Halin in Shwebo district. A second and much larger detachment was also led into a trap and destroyed on 24 April 1752. So the Mon sent the third detachment, several thousands strong, and Moksobo was paid sieged on 28 April 1752. But the Mons were repulsed on 5 May 1752 when Alaung-mintaya himself took the command and broke the siege. All their camps and equipments fell into Alaungmintaya's hand, and this greatly strengthened his forces because the Mons left many muskets (guns). From that time onwards Alaung-mintaya took the initiative and

Capitals

1752 - 1765	Shwebo(New name of Moksobo) was made a capital by Alaung-mintaya.
1765 - 83	Ava was made a capital by Myaydu Min (Sinbyushinpayay)
1783 - 1823	Amarapura was founded by Badon Min (Bodawpayay)
1823 - 1837 June	Ava was again made a capital by Sagaing Min (Bagyidaw)
1837 - 1837 June Dec.	Kyaukmyaung was the first capital under Thayawady Min
1837 - 1857 Dec.	Amarapura was the second capital under Thayawady Min
1857 - 1885	Mandalay was founded by Mindon Min and Thibaw Min continued to live there until he was captured by the British.

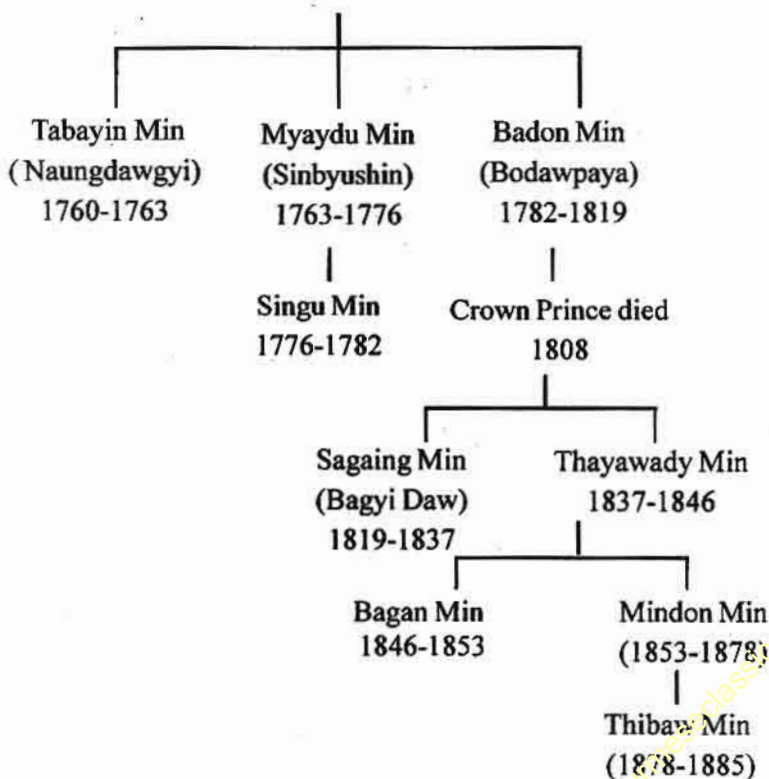
• All these six capitals are in the dry zone and except Ava, none of these places are good enough for being made a capital.

chapter ~ one

Politics of the Konbaung Period

Alaung-mintaya Dynasty
(1752-1885)

Alaung-mintaya
1752-1760



started an offensive war. He became more and more popular and his followers were greatly increased in number. There were three reasons for this increase in Alaung-mintaya's troops.

Firstly, Myanmas did not want any foreign domination and were earnestly awaiting for an able man to lead them.

Secondly, there was a great promise for developing the nation after unification.

Thirdly, soldiers and officers of the ex-king of Ava were ready to join the forces of Alaung-mintaya.

So from 1752-57, we find a great surge of Myanma nationalism. Other centres of resistance were Mogaung in Myitkyina district and Salin in Minbu district. Many of their leaders seemed to have much better chances than Alaung-mintaya. But they did not have Alaung-mintaya's ambition and courage. Sooner or later they became his followers. There were also some Myanmas, Shans and Kadus who joined the Mons but they quickly realized their mistake and took the water of allegiance sent from Alaung-mintaya after he conquered the third detachment of Mons at Moksobo. The Alaung-mintaya's movement was getting stronger day by day and the Mons failed to understand how he could have such followers. On the other hand they believed that his popularity would wane soon. Therefore no reinforcement was sent to the Mons under Talaban in Ava. For his failure to defeat Alaung-mintaya, Talaban was recalled and was replaced by Taung U Ngwegun Hmu, who was not even as good as Talaban. Ngwegun Hmu recalled all the small Mon forces operating in the northern places like Wuntho, Kawlin and Okpho and with the combined strength of these forces, Alaung-mintaya was attacked from many directions. Alaung-mintaya suffered many failures but his spirit never failed.

His followers were also persistent. By October 1752, Mons abandoned all offensives. By December 1753, Alaung-mintaya besieged Ava. Mons silently abandoned Ava at night on 23 December 1753 because of two reasons :

- (1) They lost all contact with the Bago Government,
- (2) They were afraid that Myanmas and Shans living within the town might rebel.

So by January 1754 the whole of Upper Myanma was cleared of Mons and came under Alaung-mintaya's control. He received homage from many Shan Sawbwas. It was only in March 1754, that the Mon government sent its whole army against Alaung-mintaya. Mons besieged Ava on 24 April 1754 and destroyed the surrounding places. Alaung-mintaya mustered all the forces available and with much difficulty he defeated the Mons who withdrew only because the rainy season had begun. If not, they would have prolonged the fight. During this time, Myanmas living in the delta were eagerly awaiting his advance to join him. Unfortunately their plans were betrayed and as a result many of them were killed. Ex-King of Ava, Maha Damaraza Dipati was put to death together with his family on 13 October 1755. As the news of this reached Alaung-mintaya, he hastily prepared for the delta campaign. Before he marched Pyay rebelled but the Mons who fled from Ava besieged the city and fortunately Alaung-mintaya arrived before they surrendered. So on 4 February 1755, the Mons left Pyay. At Pyay Alaung-mintaya received the homage of all chiefs in central Myanma. Amongst great festivities Alaung-mintaya honoured especially the Lord of Salay and Myothugyi of Pakkange and soon after that he captured Lun-say in the Hinthada district and renamed it Myanaung. At Myanaung he received the homage of Taung U, Hinthada, Myaungmya, Patheingyi and Tharaw.

On 15 May 1755, Dagon was taken and it was renamed Yangon (the End of Strife). At that time there were in the port of Dagon, Three small English ships belonging to the East India Company and two others belonging to two private Englishmen were taken aslo. Alaung-mintaya took all the guns and cannons from these ships but Captain Jackson protested this under international law that neutral ships must not be molested. French people at Tanyin sided with the Mons and the English remained strictly neutral.

After the capture of Dagon, Alaung-mintaya returned north because Manipuris had invaded Myanma. Alaung-mintaya sent Minhla Mingaung Kyaw, the Captain of the Musketeers to subdue the Manipuris. By the end of the year after restoring law and order in northern Myanma, Alaung-mintaya returned to the delta and attacked Tanyin. The Mons got the help of French artillery and therefore Alaung-mintaya suffered heavy losses. The siege of Tanyin lasted a year. At last Alaung-mintaya selected ninety-three volunteers and stormed the town. Tanyin was taken on 26 July 1756. The town was completely destroyed and Alaung-mintaya built Yangon to take the place of Tanyin as the major seaport of Myanma. Then Alaung-mintaya advanced to Bago. He got the help of Shan levies who marched down from Taung U. The Mons stoutly defended their city. Alaung-mintaya increased the ninety three volunteers to three hundred. Because of a long siege the people within Bago were almost starved to death. Therefore, the Mon King sent a deputation of prominent Shans, Myanmas and Mon Phonyis to plead for peace as Mingaung had once sent a similar deputation to Razadarit, when Razadarit was surrounding Ava. But Alaung-mintaya replied in the noblest language that he desired nothing but complete surrender and gave the deputation to take back two bunches of flowers

saying that one was for offering and the other was for adornment. The deputation went back and offered one bunch of flowers to Shwemawdaw pagoda and gave the other to the King's daughter. This made Talaban very angry as he had an intention to take the princess as his wife. He was the Supreme Commander of the Army and therefore he had no intention to surrender. He wanted to fight till the end and die like a man. So with some of the best troops he broke through the Myanma lines and established himself at Sittaung.

The Mon princess, the daughter of the King, was sent to Alaung-mintaya and the Mon Crown Prince and many other leaders came to pay homage to Alaung-mintaya. In spite of all these Alaung-mintaya did not offer any terms of peace. So the Mons renewed their defence. On 6 May 1757, Bago was taken. King Byinnyadala, his son Thado Uparaza, his queen, sons, and daughters and all the palace treasures were seized. Most of the buildings were set to fire. Many fled to Chang Mai and Thailand. Hundreds and thousands of people lost their lives during the fightings. Accordingly the population was reduced greatly and many cultivated lands relapsed into jungle. The delta, one of the most fertile areas was left as an uncultivated waste.

Alaung-mintaya was lavish in his praise and rewards, but he was merciless to failure. Unsuccessful officers were executed. He was the best leader for guerilla warfare. He got no time to train his men in pitchbattle tactics. But they showed their worth in stockade fighting and ambushes, because in these sort of warfare individual initiative and cunning can be used to the fullest advantage and generally Myanma were smart for such purposes. Not one in twenty got guns. Men in the levies had to bring their own weapons, mostly dahs and pointed bamboos and they were not paid except the daily ration. In stockade building they were the best. Even the

English sappers had to admire their work for its efficiency and quick construction. A Myanmar soldier was individually very brave and skilful in the use of his sword. In spite of having no proper military training they fought well. They were among the best in Southeast Asia.

Tabayin Min (1760-1763)

He was called Naungdawgyi as he was the eldest son of Alaung-mintaya and he was made Crown Prince before Alaung-mintaya died. A crown prince is often called Upayaza. When news of Alaung-mintaya's death reached him he took the throne. His next brother Myaydu Min rebelled. But it was only a very weak attempt. Myaydu Min submitted and was forgiven. Then the King sent for two generals he disliked and executed them. When he sent for Mingaung Nawahta, the general sensed danger and rebelled. Mingaung Nawahta had 12,000 soldiers and most of them were armed with muskets. He was also the most popular general and therefore many soldiers joined him. He captured Ava and made a stand from within the city. The King sent his ministers to negotiate peace but Mingaung Nawahta refused to offer terms, because he distrusted the King. He was determined to die like a man. The King surrounded Ava but was not able to take it. He came to Sagaing to lead the attack on Ava.

Mingaung Nawahta had decided to fight till the end. He accepted no terms of surrender but as the city was surrounded he was unable to get any food supply. Therefore, at last he and a few of his followers broke out and fled west. He was killed in a battle near Kyaukse. There was also another rebellion by the Governor of Taung U, who was the King's uncle but he surrendered and was forgiven. There was still another rebellion. Mon general Talaban, after his unsuccessful attack on Madaya retreated

Chieng Mai. The Myanma troops followed and took Chieng Mai. Talaban escaped but his family was captured. So Talaban surrendered. He was pardoned and taken into the service of the King. The King died in 1763 at an early age of 29. He left seven children and was succeeded by his next brother.

Myaydu Min (Sinbyu Shin) (1763-1776)

Myaydu Min (Sinbyu Shin) was equal to his father in energy. But he used his energy in a wrong way. The country was in need of peaceful administration. On the contrary, he made a series of wars. He led the invasion of Manipur in December 1764, because he wanted the captives of Manipur to populate his new city at Ava.

Shwebo or Moksobo was the capital of Alaungmintaya, but Myaydu Min (Sinbyu Shin) moved to Ava in 1766. This transfer of the capital was a wise step because of all the capitals in Upper Myanma, Ava had the best situation. It stands on the Ayeyawady River, the main highway of the country. The city also had an easy access to Kyaukse rice fields, the main rice producing area of central Myanma. Yet Ava is really not the best place for a capital in Myanma. Since Vasco de Gama, a Portuguese opened the sea route to the East in 1498, the delta is the best place for trade and foreign contact of Myanma. If either Yangon or Tanyin had been made the capital, would have been much better. Unfortunately none of the Konbaung kings thought of having a capital with an easy access to the sea.

Myanmas felt that the delta was a foreign land and considered it unsafe for them to live among the Mons. Still it was not a good excuse. Mons as a people were peace loving and it was only a few of them who wanted trouble and it would be all right to move the capital to the delta. If the kings had concentrated their attention to give good adminis-

tration instead of making continuous wars with neighbouring countries, all people living in the Kingdom would suffer and the country would not have a chance to develop on modern lines. They thought and acted in the same way as their ancestors had thought and acted from early times. The idea of building new religious places and to repair the old ones and to wage wars occasionally seemed to be their only function in the late 18th century.

Mon Mutiny

Myaydu Min had raised several Mon levies during his Ayutthaya Campaign. These Mon levies mutinied in 1773. They took Madama and attacked Yangon but they were soon defeated. These rebels together with their families numbering 3,000 escaped into Thailand. Those who stayed behind had to bear the brunt of a severe revenge.

The King came to Yangon in great pomp to impress the Mons in two ways:

- (1) Shwedagon was raised to its present height (327 feet). It was gilt with gold according with the weight of his body. A new Hti was fixed because the old one had fallen down in the earthquake of 1769.
- (2) He executed the ex-Mon King and his family who were taken prisoner in 1759.

Myaydu Min died in 1776, when he was only 39, leaving eleven children. His twenty-one years old son Singu Min succeeded against the will of Alaung-mintaya.

Singu Min (1776-1782)

Singu Min stopped all wars, except with Manipur. But there were still some troubles. Singu Min had executed his uncle, the Amyint Min (the fourth son of Alaung-mintaya) and his brother and their followers for alleged treason. The King was very careless in his behaviour, going out of the city with only a few followers and leaving the palace vacant for weeks at a time. This gave an opportunity for the conspirators. Once while he was away at the Thihataw pagoda on an Ayeyarwady island in the Shwebo District, his cousin, Paunggasā Maung Maung seized the throne at night. When the news reached the King, his followers deserted him. The King came back alone to the palace at dawn and was killed. After seven days on the throne, on 11 February 1782, Paunggasā Maung Maung was killed and Badon Min, the third son of Alaung-mintaya took the throne. Singu Min was captured and executed on 14 February 1782. Alaung-mintaya wanted all his six sons to become kings successively. But only three of them were kings; Badon Min was the third and last of the six sons who become kings.

Badon Min (1782-1819)

On all outward appearances he seemed to be a successful king. The Myanma Empire under Badon Min was the biggest. He had many good generals and circumstances also favoured his success. In private character Badon Min was very proud and had selfish tendencies.

On his accession there was the usual "massacre of Kinsman". Singu Min's queens were burnt alive together with their babies in their arms. A few months later his brother and his best general Maha Thiha Thuya were found conspiring against him. By the end of 1872, a pretender Nga Myat Pon

who claimed to be a prince of the Ava Dynasty attacked the palace at night with some 200 followers. They were captured and executed as usual. Most of these rebels were from Paungga village and so the entire population of Paungga was burnt alive. But according to the chronicles Badon Min was a most religious king. He built the Aung Myay Lawka, or Ain Dawya pagoda at Sagaing, on the site of the humble house he occupied as a junior prince. On 12 May 1783, Badon Min moved his capital from Ava to Amarapura. It caused a great hardship in the country. Because the people in general had to pay heavy contributions in money and labour. When Shwebo was abandoned and Ava was taken up as the capital, it was a wise step. The hardship of moving was justified, because Ava was the best place in Upper Myanma for a capital. But the move from Ava to Amarapura was not a wise move at all.

The Mons of Lower Myanma rebelled in September 1783. They suddenly attacked Yangon and killed the Governor and occupied the town. But they were soon expelled. They attempted again to take the city of Yangon but failed. As the result of this rebellion there were many executions and thousands of Mons moved into Thailand. There was still another Mon rebellion in 1824 which was also suppressed.

Administration under Badon Min

Badon Min collected 600 inscriptions to check the Thathanamyay (ecclesiastical lands). This collection of inscriptions was very useful for informations regarding land tax. It was common that rich people donated some lands for the maintenance of religious monuments. These collections were also very valuable for historical information. The man in charge of these collections was Twin Thin Taik Wun (1726-92) who wrote such works as *Wethandayapyo*, *Zanekepyo*, *66 Jatakas* and the great *Yazawinthis*.

Badon Min also ordered twice for getting Sittan (Statement of Village Headman) once in 1784 and another in 1803. These statements were made

- (1) establish the fact that the present headman was the rightful successor to that office,
- (2) to fix the boundary of the area under his control,
- (3) to clarify the location of such lands belonging to the Religion, to the Royal Family and to the Armed Men in the King's service and
- (4) to tell from whom he took orders to carry out Min Hmu Min Gin (Affairs of the King).

The population in Myanma proper was only 1,831,467, and Rakhine and Taninthayi had together 170,000 and therefore the total is 2,001,467. It means that there were only a dozen people per square mile. He repaired the Nanda Lake, Aungpinle Lake and Maung-magan Lake. But he used forced labour for these repairs from the levies of Shan, Rakhine and Mon villages. The King often claimed himself to be the incarnation of Lord Buddha. But he exacted cruel punishment upon those who ventured to disagree with him.

The King built many pagodas, the largest being Mingun in Sagaing district, erected during 1790 and 1797. He planned it be the biggest monument. Two Chin- thays guarding the pagoda were each 95 feet high with eyes of 13 feet circumferences. The height of the pagoda was to be 500 feet. But when it reached the height of 160 feet, it collapsed. The great bell of Mingun weighs 80 tons and is second biggest bell in the world.

In 1802 and 1812, Sinhalese religious missions came to Myanmar. There was some importance in the 1802 mission. The King of Srilanka (Kirti Siri Raja Singha, 1748-1778) introduced a new system of ordination that the cultivators cannot become monks. So the indignant lower class sent missions to Myanmar and Badon Min let them be ordained by the Primate (Thathanabine). On their return five Myanmar phongyies (full chapter for any Rahan - Khan Ordination Service) five accompanied them and made further ordinations at Srilanka. Their successors, up to the present day, are known as the Amarapura Thinga and the opposition which accepted the caste distinction is known as the Thai Thinga. In 1810 some Lords and Brahmans were sent to Buddhagaya with much offerings from the King. The mission went by the Ann Pass to Rakhine and through Chittagaung they proceeded to the holy place.

In 1813, Judson and his wife arrived at Yangon and established the famous American Baptist Mission in Myanmar. They came to Myanmar by accident. They intended to work in India, but for fear of political complications the English government in India observed strict neutrality and so it discouraged the visit of Judsons. So they came over to Myanmar. In Myanmar Badon Min allowed them to preach Christianity, but no help was given to them. Badon Min punished with death any one drinking liquor, smoking opium, or killing large animals like elephants, horses and oxen. Criminals escaped from execution if phongyies intervened.

The Rakhine Fugitives

Rakhine was conquered by the eldest son of Badon Min early in 1785. Before withdrawal Myanmar outposts were scattered all over Rakhine to maintain peace and order. But there had been continued disorder. The Rakhine had every

excuse on their side. They rebelled not against government but against tyranny. Taxes were heavy and very often hundreds of young men were taken to serve in the labour gangs. 3,000 were taken to repair Meiktila Lake and none returned. In 1790 Chieng Mai Campaign, 6,000 were taken away to serve in the army and many hundreds never returned. In 1797, 2,000 men were demanded to make bricks for the Mingun pagoda. Therefore, the people rose in rebellion. Sindin Myosa, Nga Chin Pyan (King Bearing) became the popular leader of the rebels. Thousand of Rakhine fled into Bangladesh where conditions under the British were a little better.

Scarcely populated Rakhine now became almost a deserted land. Among the refugees there were some desperate spirits who made the British territory a base to attack the Myanma on the Rakhine side. British administration was not so thorough in those days and, therefore, it was unable to check their movements. Myanma government also failed to communicate officially with British India Government to check these Rakhine activities. Instead, one Myanma Governor marched right over the frontier with 5,000 men to capture the rebels. Badon Min's conquest over Rakhine was the remote cause of the Myanma conflict with the English later. To meet the Myanma troops a detachment was sent from Calcutta, but through peaceful negotiations Myanma troops agreed to withdraw and the British handed over the fugitives they wanted.

In 1798 more Rakhine refugees poured into Chittagoung again as a result of Nga Chin Pyan's successes. Lieutenant Cox was sent to feed and shelter them. Where they settled down is still called Cox's Bazaar. A Myanma force came into Chittagoung again to get back these people. An envoy also went to the Viceroy at Calcutta to ask for

them. The reply was that the British Government was ready to surrender criminals but not political refugees. The number of refugees gradually increased to 50,000. This refusal was considered by the Myanma as an act of plain hostility and the King threatened an immediate war which later proved to be only a threat.

Nga Chin Pyan was a great patriot and when he fled into Chittagoung the British welcomed him. But later he abused this British hospitality by making a series of raids into Rakhine from his base in Chittagaung. Thus, he was classed as a criminal rather than a political leader and the British Government set on his head a price of Rs. 5,000 and invited the Myanma troops to cross over the frontier to hunt him down. But he was never captured. He died in the forest in 1815. This English permission to come over and hunt down the rebel was taken as a sign of British weakness.

Badon Min died on 5 June 1819 in the 38th year of his reign at the ripe age of 75. He left 122 children and 203 grand children. He had nominated his grandson as successor since 1808 and so there was no difficulty for Sagaing Min to become king.

Sagaing Min (1819 - 1837)

The Period before the War (1819 - 1824)

Sagaing Min was of practically the same type as any other past rulers of Myanma. But he was unfortunate to rule when publicity was greater than in earlier days. Thus, his frailties were propagated and critised by the foreigners more than other kings. He was the first Myanma King to have a closer relation with Europeans. In his natural mood, he was mild, agreeable and good humoured, though he could not hold himself when things went wrong against his desire. He

was also not a man of strong resolutions and thus he could be easily persuaded by his favourites and was found to have an ever changing mind. He was fond of festivities and so he was not as religious minded as Badon Min, his grandfather. He was more or less a debauchee and he was of a mediocre ability.

The American Baptist Missionary Mr. Judson observed that the Sagaing Min was quick in understanding things. He appreciated the European ways and had some interest to reform his country along the advanced methods of the West. But the war had embittered him to refuse to listen to anything European. He had an interest in science, i.e. not modern science, but alchemy to make himself longliving and invincible. Col. Burney, British Resident at Ava, said that the Sagaing Min was a weak man, incapable of having an independent judgement. He would rather listen to some silly advice than consult the ministers who knew better. But he was humane in many aspects. Mr. Yule said that the King was fond of sports as a spectator and was good-natured. He was unwilling to shed blood unnecessarily. Though without strength of character, he at times was arrogant and violent. In reality, Sagaing Min lived on the past glory of Myanma. He was not able to understand the strength of the English power. He left the Affairs of State in the hands of Queen Nu and her brother called Minthagyi.

He inherited a large empire and it was left for him to consolidate it and give the people a good administration. But he hopelessly failed in this. He allowed himself to be influenced by the war party under Minthagyi and Maha Bandula. Hence, this expansionist policy came into conflict with the English. His reign marked the first decline of the Myanma power and practically nothing was made to improve the situation. Myanma imperialism was just an ill conceived

drive, because there were no preparations to meet any emergency. On the other hand the economic policy of the country was also very unsound as a result of decline in agricultural production. National resources must be developed first and then a reliable regular army ought to be established. Only after that a country should, if it elected so, adopt an aggressive policy. Imperialism with no sound economy and no reliable army was mere fool-hardiness.

The Period after the War (1826 - 1837)

Sagaing Min originally was not adverse to reform on modern lines. He had no suspicions for the Europeans and appreciated many of their progressive methods. But he found them to be treacherous and repaid his hospitalities with the annexation of his lands. He became aware of their imperialist designs and, henceforth, he even refused to see their envoys. He was all the time anxious to regain his lost lands. The loss of territory was too much for his kingly prestige and, thus, he was driven into voluntary isolation. In addition to avoiding the English Envoys, he even wanted to drive away the British Residency from his capital, because its presence reminded him of defeat and none of his ministers had courage enough to tell him the truth that it was by a treaty stipulation that it was there and it could be very useful. The English, however, tried to please him by returning the Kabaw Valley. But the King's attitude remained unchanged. Even though the Myanmar army suffered a great defeat. There was no conscientious attempt for reforms in its organization. Nor was there any change in the administrative system. There was no programme whatsoever for the improvement of the people in general. In spite of the failures, the war party continued to control the King and they were even vested with greater powers. This was a very big mistake.

Early in 1831, the King's health broke down. The King was prone to recurring fits of melancholia which ultimately led to insanity. So to rule in his name a sort of Regency was appointed with Minthagyi as President. This was contrary to the interests of the Royal Family. Prince Thayawady was firmly against this though he was made a member of that Regency. So Minthagyi waited for a chance to silence Prince Thayawady.

Thayawady Rebelled

In 1837 Prince Thayawady rebelled fearing that Minthagyi might usurp the throne and made a wholesale massacre of all princes in the royal family and their followers. The Prince made Shwebo his headquarter and from there he directed the rebellion. The King's army was much better and stronger than the rebels, but there was no competent general to lead it. Thayawady Min invited the English intervention but they remained neutral because they were busy with their Afgan wars and, therefore, they did not want to open a new front of fighting. Sagaing Min abdicated the throne in favour of his brother Thayawady Min on 8 April 1837. As a prisoner Sagaing Min was treated very well, though when he died on 15 October 1846 it was vaguely suspected that he had been poisoned. With all his faults he was the best of the Konbaung kings and the most gentlemanly one.

Myanma Under Thayawady Min (1837 - 1846)

Thayawady Min usurped his brother's throne in 1837. He was addicted to gambling. He was cruel and profligate, but at the same time he had humour and was intelligent. During the first English - Myanma War he commanded an army and he knew that the English troops were too strong against the undisciplined Myanma troops. He did not agree

with the war party. As a prince, he showed interest in foreign systems of army organization and administrative machine. Thus Burney had a high hope that if Thayawady Min became king, relations with the English might improve. But things turned out contrary to expectations. On becoming king, Thayawady Min became hostile to all outsiders and suspicious of all innovations. A major cause of Thayawady Min's usurpation of the throne was the fear for Minthagyi's conspiracy, as Minthagyi was the real power behind the throne since 1831.

Thayawady Min had no quarrel with his brother and until 1837 he was loyal to him. But in those days district officers were corrupt and high officials of the court usually supported these corrupt officers. Minthagyi alleged that Thayawady Min sheltered a district officer who committed frequently such things like dacoity and banditry. To some extent this was true, but there was no proof. But Thayawady Min officially refused to acknowledge this and this incurred the royal displeasure. An order was passed by the King to surround the house of the Prince and search for evidences. Before the King's troops surrounded the house, Thayawady Min went out of the city. So all these things were good proofs to ascertain that Thayawady Min was loyal to his brother until the last moment. His success was largely due to the want of good leadership in the King's army and government. He raised an army, but it was only a gathering of local dacoits and they were very ill-equipped. The King's troops had better arms, but without good generals and the unpopularity of Minthagyi drove the King's men to the side of the rebel prince. On the other hand Thayawady Min proved to be a good organizer. Sagaing Min had to surrender at last.

Thayawady Min became a completely changed man when he became king. He was against all reforms and his reign was marked by cruelty and injustice. He was a bad administrator and had no ability to choose the right man for the right place. During his reign brigandage flourished. When he was a prince, he had liberal ideas for reform and reorganisation. But as king he let himself become enslaved by tradition and shut off all chances for improvement and change. What change did he make was to move to a new place as his residential city. The first choice was Shwebo which was the traditional land of success for the Kings of Alaung-mintaya Dynasty. But Shwebo was too far away from the major routes of the country and, therefore, it was not a good place for a capital. The second choice was Kyaukmyaung about fifty miles up-stream from Ava. This place was better situated than Shwebo but, unfortunately, it had no good hinterland. The King moved to Kyaukmyaung first. Then he came to live in Amarapura on 12 December 1837.

In home policy he introduced some reforms. By a royal edict, foreigners were no longer allowed to purchase lands in Myanma. They were also not allowed to keep any Myanma as slave. Those who were already in slavery were redeemed at the State expense. This was one remarkable measure done by Thayawady Min for the good of the people. We can find a strong national spirit plus antiforeign sentiment in it. Thayawady Min also tried to regulate the labour system at the port of Yangon, so that Myanma labourers would not be bullied by the foreign merchants. On 2 October 1841 he was in Yangon with a large army and encamped at the place now called Ain Daw Ya (in present-day Dagon township). He built a wall around the Shwe Dagon Pagoda and also dedicated a great bell to the pagoda. On 22 October 1841 he started building the new Yangon city with the Shwe Dagon Pagoda as its centre.

With these measures he hoped that Myanma will be saved from any more foreign aggression. By what he carried out in Yangon he also believed that the royal prestige was also restored. But he failed to improve the army organization and the administrative structure. All these things remained still medieval in dire need of changes. Towards the close of 1841 he became a nervous breakdown and never really recovered from that. On 17 November 1846 he died and his son Bagan Min became King.

Bagan Min (1846-1853)

Thayawady Min was succeeded by Bagan Min (1846-1853). This Bagan Min was neither an administrator nor a soldier. There was scarcely anything praiseworthy about him. He lived a grand luxurious life leaving the management of state affairs to his favourites who were not even men of mediocrity. Among his favourites two Mohammedans called Maung Bhai Sab and Maung Bhein were the most influential. These court favourites defended gangs of robbers and took the lion's share of their loot. According to a Myanma Law, the estate of a criminal was deemed illegal. In order to seize their property this way, many wealthy people were framed guilty and executed. Within the first two years of his accession about 5,000 people were executed.

Mindon Min (1852-1878)

He was entirely different from his predecessors. He was peaceful in nature and was also a man of sound common sense. He always tried his best to avoid bloodshed and violence. But in his foreign dealings he was not very diplomatic although he proved to be a very agreeable man to get along with. The missionary Dr. Marks said that Mindon Min was every inch a King. He was also deeply religious and

at the same time he was tolerant of other religions like Christianity and Mohammedanism. He allowed the propagation of these religions in his country.

But he had a peculiar idea about the English system of government. The phongyis in Myanma were respected and they had a considerable influence over the King in some political affairs. Mindon Min thought that an English clergyman would have a similar influence over his monarch. Therefore, he desired Dr. Marks to influence Queen Victoria to return the Province of Bago to him. But this was not possible and it showed that the King was ignorant of the organization of a modern state under a constitutional monarch.

Mindon Min was born on 5 July 1814. His name was Maung Lwin and he was created the Myosa of Mindon. After the defeat of Bagan Min in the Second English-Myanma War, Mindon Min went to Shwebo and raised the standard of rebellion. He was successful because Bagan Min was extremely unpopular. He was also helped by his brother Maung Gauk and U Kaung. When he became King on 17 February 1853 he appointed his brother Maung Gauk, Ainsheimin (Heir Apparent). Shwepyi-wungyi U Kaung was also made the Chief Minister. This minister also proved to be an able administrator. Thus Mindon Min had good people around him to help in the management of the state affairs. Although it was a usurpation, his ascendancy to the throne was acclaimed by people in general.

The Domestic Affairs of Mindon Min

Moving to a new Capital

When Mindon Min came to the throne in 1852 the capital was Amarapura. After five years at Amarapura he wanted to build a new capital, because there was a prophecy that one lives long in the shadows of the Mandalay Hill. In accordance with the prophecy the King built his new capital at the foot of the Mandalay Hill. He called this new city Ratanapura (Yadanabon) 'the City of Gems'. But it was popularly known as Mandalay. In accordance with the belief that men buried alive at the gates shall protect the city from enemies, it was said that fifty two men and children were buried, three each at twelve gates, one at each four corners, one at each four stockades and four palace gates and four under the principle throne. So the total is fifty two. When Mindon Min was asked by an English envoy about it, he denied any knowledge of it and said that no such things were done in building his city. In comparison with Amarapura, Mandalay is a better site but it is not as good as Ava. So we cannot say that this building of a new city was a wise move.

Religious Policy

Mindon Min tried to appear like a very religious person. He would help enormously the propagation and extension of the Buddha's Religion. But at the same time he was tolerant to all religions. He even helped the Christian Missionaries with money and lands. On 4 May 1868 the engraving of the whole set of the Three Pitakas on 729 stone slabs was finished and these Tipitaka stones were placed in the Kuthodaw pagoda. He placed a new *hti* on the Shwe Dagon Pagoda. This *hti* cost 6 lakhs of rupees and weighed 1 1/3 tons. With the permission of the English government the *hti* was sent to Yangon as the King's present to the Shwe

Dagon Pagoda Trustees and it was fixed on the Pagoda on 26 November 1871. Mindon Min also built the Kuthodaw Pagoda after the model of Shwezayan of Bagan. Besides, he distinguished himself as the Convenor of fifth Buddhist Synod (Pancama Sangayana) that began on 15 April 1871 and finished on 12 September 1871. About 24,000 monks attended the convention and all of them were from all over Myanma and Srilanka. They assembled at the Myaynan Palace for nearly five months. They recited the Teachings of the Buddha and edited them before they put them in writing. In this way Mindon Min received the proud title of the Convenor of the Fifth Buddhist Synod. It is said that he spent Rs 226,000,000 (two twenty six million kyats) on charity only. This big amount of money was not all his own. He was alleged of misappropriating state money by one of the elderly ministers in his famous treatise on politics called *Raja-dhamma-sangaha*.

The Reforms of Mindon Min

(i) Coinage Introduced

Mindon Min had a mint built in the palace yard on 19 October 1865 and coins minted to the value of one kyat were in circulation on 11 November 1865. Before this introduction Myanma used gold, silver and copper instead of coins, as mediums of exchange. Therefore, there was great difficulty in commercial dealings. There were some coins minted during the times of Anaukphetlun (1606-1628), Badon Min (1782-1819), Thayawady Min (1837-1846) and Bagan Min (1846-1853), but the coins were not made legal tender and therefore, they did not serve as currency. These coins were largely used as medals of honour. But now in 1865, Mindon Min minted gold and silver coins as

currency. Shwedinga Muse is worth about three rupees and Matse, seven rupees. So the ratio was one golden coin to 28 rupees. (Rakhine was using coins earlier than Myanma. Coins were introduced into Rakhine since 1660 and India was using coins 1000 years before the Christian Era.)

(ii) Abolition of Myosaship

Myosa means giving the right to a person "to eat" the revenues of a town or in other word he was made the Lord of the Town. Myanma kings were in the habit of making Myosas for service for favour and the officers of the king were not given monthly salaries. Instead they were given towns "to eat". But Mindon Min introduced for the first time in Myanma "the Salary System". So it was no longer necessary to confer Myosaship on the officers. Thus Myosaship was abolished.

(iii) Establishing the Salary System and Public Treasuries

Revenues were received both in cash and kind. But when coinage was introduced the King demanded revenues in cash only. Therefore, public treasuries were established in all important towns throughout the country. He also introduced the monthly paying system to the King's servants and, therefore, a public treasury in every important town was necessary for the proper management of this new salary system. By introducing these two systems, Mindon Min hoped to achieve; a sound administration free from bribery and corruption. Unfortunately, these two new systems were not successful.

(iv) New Revenue System

Before Mindon Min, there was no proper system of taxation. According to Myanma political thought, the first King on this earth was Manu, who was also called Maha Thamada and he was elected to enforce law and order and in remuneration for his services the people gave him every year one tenth of their annual income. But actually, it was exacted 50% or more. The collection of the taxes was also in the "farm" method. The result of this system was that the government always got less than what the people had given. So Mindon Min introduced in Thathameda Tax. Each group of ten houses was required to give Rs.100/. as Thathamada tax annually. But each house did not pay the same amount. The rich pay more and the amount to be given by each home was decided by village elders, or Ten House Leaders. The tax collected was sent to the Treasury. Mindon Min intended to tax only the Thathamada and to abolish other taxes, like tolls at checking points and ferries. But later, Thathamada was not the only tax but one of many other taxes. Other sources of income came from duties on imports and exports. Mindon Min collected a 5% uniform custom duty. The King also enjoyed monopoly on precious stones and timber. Another source of income came from tributes sent to him by the subject princes.

(v) Encouragement of Industry and Commerce

In spite of his numerous monopolies, Mindon Min encouraged industries. A good number of factories were established under European supervision to make fire-arms, to coin money, to cast iron and to refine petroleum. He also introduced sending messages by telegraph.

(vi) Reform in the Armed Forces

The army was badly in need of reform. But Mindon Min was supposed to be a peace-loving monarch who had no use of any army. Yet reforms were introduced as regards discipline and weapons. European officers were employed to teach Myanma soldiers on use of new arms and new military tactics. Some youths were sent to France for military training. But all these things were done not seriously and there were no real improvements. Another reason for failures in this aspect was that Mindut Min (Prince Kanaung, the Crown Prince) who took the initiative for these reforms was assassinated in this uprising of Min Gun and Min Gon Daing princes. On the death of Mindut Min, army reforms, etc. were abandoned. There was also no adequate funds to carry out all these reforms.

Critical Remarks on these Reforms

Mindon Min's reforms looked good on paper but most of them were never carried out. Administration was still not systematic. The most fertile parts of Myanma were lost to the English who started various programmes of improving that part of the country under them. Lower Myanma under the English was progressing by leaps and bounds. Between 1852 and 1862, the population there had increased from 6,000 to one million. This was because people from Upper Myanma went there to get more land under cultivation. During the Period 1826 to 1855, 250,000 people from Upper Myanma went over to Rakhine. After 1869, (opening of the Suez Canal) migration to lower country increased more rapidly.

Europeans were also competing among themselves to extend their empires in the Americas, Africa and Asia. They wanted markets for their manufactured goods and they wanted raw materials to feed their industries. Myanma proved to be a very good place for this kind of economic exploitation. From among the products of Myanma, rice, timber and earth oil were in good demand. Although it was not the only cause, the opening of the Suez Canal made possible the change from domestic economy in Myanma into commercial economy. It means that formerly rice was grown for home consumption alone but now it was for export also. In such a period of transition the conditions in Lower Myanma under the English were much more favourable.

Rebllions During the Time of Mindon Min

The theory of Myanma Kingship was quite different from the Divine Right Theory of Kingship in Europe. In Myanma the claim to rule was through conquest and only after conquest that a king might marry a princess of the fallen dynasty and establish another claim to rule. The eldest son was not necessarily the successor and a king would name the next king. Even this kind of nomination was sometimes ignored when the king died. Alaung-mintaya ordered that all of his sons must rule one after another in succession. But Myaydu Min left aside this order and made his son Singu Min the King. After Singu Min the fourth son of Alaung-mintaya called Badon Min became King. But he did not give the throne to his next brother. Thayawady Min was succeeded by his son Bagan Min. But he was dethroned and succeeded by his brother Mindon Min. Mindon Min in fact was a usurper. Mindon Min appointed his brother Mindut Min as Ainsheimin, or Uparaja, or Crown Prince. Min Gun Min wanted this position and he and his brother Min Gon

Daing rebelled with the intention to kill both his father and his uncle. Fortunately, Mindon Min escaped but Mindut Min was assassinated on 2 August 1866. The rebellion was quickly subdued and the two rebel princes escaped into Lower Myanma. The English sent them to Calcutta. From there they escaped to French Indo-China.

When the Crown Prince died, his sons rebelled. The leader Ba Dain was captured and executed on 15 May 1867 in that same year 1867, Katha Min rebelled also. But this rebellion was subdued also and because of Dr. Marks intervention Mindon Min forgave the Prince and his followers. All these rebellions clearly pointed out the fact that the dynasty was falling quickly. Mindon Min thought it expedient not to appoint another Crown Prince. He died on 1 October 1878. When he was seriously ill, Queen Sinbyumashin and party chose Thibaw Min as successor against princes Thonze, Mekkhaya and Nyaungyan who had much better claims than Thibaw to the throne. Mindon Min had 48 sons and all of them were eligible for the throne. Apart from them there were nephews and grandsons of former kings, each of whom would try to become a king when the circumstances were favourable. Thibaw Min had no choice but to carry out the Massacre of Kinsmen. Seventy princes and princesses were killed. This kind of blood-bath was almost a recognised institution in Myanma and cannot hold Thibaw Min to be personally responsible. It was the want of a law for succession and the instability of the government that such a purge was always a necessity at the beginning of each reign or even during the reign of a king.

Thibaw Min (1878-1885) and the End of the Dynasty

Thibaw Min was noted for his religious education but he had some knowledge of the western world. He was once sent to Dr. Marks's School to learn English. Unfortunately, that was not enough to realize the need for changes along modern lines in the country. On the other hand he was too good-natured and let other irresponsible persons rule in his place.

Anti-British sentiment grew and the British Resident withdrew after the massacre. With the propagation of the English, Thibaw Min became almost a tyrant to the outside world. Actually Thibaw Min was a King only in name. He had very little interest in administration. The vigour of the dynasty had already died out. There were many riots, conspiracies and revolts. Rebellions broke out in the Shan States and also along the English border. Even a town so close to the capital like Sagaing was plundered by the dacoits. A civil war broke out in the Shan States and Kachins fought their neighbours. In the first year of Thibaw Min's reign, 200,000 people moved into Lower Myanma.

Reforms made by Mindon Min were already abandoned and there was much chaos. Under these conditions revenues failed and the government was almost bankrupt. Various trade concessions and rights to exploit Myanma natural resources were given to the French with a hope that English threats would be effectively silenced. On the other hand, the English were afraid that Myanma would eventually become a French protectorate if the French were allowed a free hand in Myanma. Thus, finally, the English thought it expedient to interfere as quickly as possible. At first the English policy was to turn Thibaw Min into a vassal. But

when they found it impossible they decided to put an end to the Alaung-mintaya dynasty. Apart from these, there were territorial disputes about Western Kayah, Alanmyo and Manipur. But the real reason of the English declaration of war on Myanma was to stop the French encroachment in Myanma.

In October 1885 an ultimatum was given by the English to the Myanma King giving only three weeks' time for an answer. The ultimatum said that a British Resident must be received at the capital and the Bombay Burma Trading Corporation case was to be revised and all the foreign relations of Myanma must be put under the English control. Kinwun Mingyi persuaded the King to grant all these demands. But the Dowager Queen Sinbyumashin and Tainda Mingyi were determined to fight it out and they won. So a war was declared with the English. General Prendergast was in command of the English troop and within two weeks' time the English entered the capital. On 28 November 1885 the King and his two Queens were captured and taken to Yatanagiri in Southern India.

King Thibaw was born on 1 January 1859 and died at the age of 57 in Yadanagiri as a prisoner on 15 December 1916. Upper Myanma was annexed to be the British Indian Empire on 1 January 1886, but it took almost a decade to pacify the country.

Relations with Neighbouring Countries

In 1758 and 1759, Alaung-mintaya subdued the northern Shan States. After that he sent an army to Manipur. The causes of the Manipur campaign were as follows:

Gharib Newaz, the ruler of Manipur, died in 1755 and a civil war broke out for succession. One pretender came to Alaung-mintaya for help. Before this trouble in Manipur, Manipuri horsemen often invaded Upper Myanma and plundered the country. Now Alaung-mintaya carried out a full revenge upon them. Alaung-mintaya's troops invaded Manipur and the capital Imphal was taken. About 4000 Manipuris were killed because they refused to follow their conquerors into Myanma. Many artisans were taken to the capital of Myanma; Manipuris were skilful in many crafts and they introduced the *Acheik* pattern. They were also very good horsemen and served under the Myanma kings as "Cassay Cavalry". They were also good at astrology and served as Court Astrologers. Thus Myanma got some Manipuri culture. On his return from Manipur, Alaung-mintaya tried to build a dam across the Mu River, but as the project was not successful, he built the Maha Nanda Lake to supply Shwebo with abundant water.

After the fall of Bago, Madama, Dawe, Chieng Mai, Anan and other states in northwest, Thailand sent tributes to Alaung-mintaya. Thousands of Mon refugees went over to Thailand. Thailand in those days possessed the whole peninsula of Taninthayi and often raided over the Myanma border. Alaung-mintaya, therefore, decided to attack Thailand. Another very important cause of the attack was to capture as many people from Thailand as possible, so that they may be transferred into Lower Myanma to cultivate the fertile fields. Alaung-mintaya wanted to regain the lost population that went over to Thailand. Hence, his Thailand campaign that started on 21 December 1769. He advanced through Madama and Dawe and captured the Taninthayi peninsula and then went eastwards over the hills to the shore of the Gulf of Thailand. He captured the coastal towns of Kwe, Pran, Nawng Chik, and Pechaburi. He captured these towns very easily. He surrounded Ayutthaya, the capital of Thailand on 11 April 1760 and sent a letter to the Thai King saying "His Myanma Majesty comes as a divine incarnation to spread the true religion in your country. Come forth respect and present elephants and a daughter". But Mon refugees there warned the Thais to be very careful in negotiative terms of peace, etc. The Thais put up a solid stand from within their capital. Portuguese and Mohammedan gunners helped them. Here, it will be of some use to know all the Myanma campaigns against Thailand.

The first siege of Ayutthaya was made by Tabinshwehti in 1548.

The second siege of Ayutthaya was made by Bayinnaung in 1564 and Ayutthaya fell.

The third siege was made by the same King Bayinnaung in 1569 though he failed to take it this time.

The fourth siege was made by Nandabayin in 1587. But he failed to take the city.

The fifth siege was this attempt by Alaung-mintaya in 1760.

The sixth siege of Ayutthaya was made by Sinbyu-shin in 1769. He was able to capture the city.

The seventh siege was made by Bodawpaya in 1785. But he failed to capture the city.

Alaung-mintaya invaded Thailand for two reasons. The first reason was to bring back the Mon refugees to repopulate Lower Myanma. The second reason was his love of adventure. He started his campaign very late in the winter of 1760. So rains set in before he was able to take the city. Fever and dysentery attacked his soldiers. Alaung-mintaya himself became very ill. So within a week of arrival, he retreated, abandoning 40 guns of 3 calibre and left Mingaung-nawyata with 500 horses and 6000 foot to guard the rear. Mingaung was a very able soldier and he did his duty exception well in this retreat. Alaung-mintaya was carried in a litter. At Kinywa, Bilin township, Thaton district, he died at dawn on 11 May 1760. But his death was made public only when the retreating army reached Yangon on 16 May 1760. The news of the death reached Shwebo on 6 June 1760. The remains of the King was landed at Kyaukmyaung and taken to Shwebo from Halingtha Gate (North Western Gate of Shwebo).

The Thai Campaign (1764 - 1767)

Myaydu Min wanted to finish the work started by his father. He sent his army to attack Ayutthaya in 1764. General Thihapati with 20,000 men (mostly Shans) started from Kengtung and slowly fought way down from Cheing Mai through Vieng Haung (Linzin). General Maha Nawyatha with another 20,000 men fought his way southeast from Dawe to Pechaburi. Myanma suffered heavy losses but they fought on. When the rains set in, they stopped their activities but on the approach of summer they fought again. They swept over the whole country, burning villages and making the chiefs drink the water of allegiance. The two generals joined hands under the wall of Ayutthaya in 1767. The siege of Ayutthaya lasted fourteen months. Hostilities did not stop in the rainy season. Shans of Thailand sent troops to raise the siege but they were defeated. The Ayutthaya King tried to force his way out but was driven back. In this critical moment the Chief Commander Maha Nawyatha died of fever. So Thihapati had to finish the work alone. The City of Ayutthaya was on the point of starvation and it was taken to the evening of 28 March 1767. There was indiscriminate slaughter and the city was put to fire. The Ayutthaya King was killed in action and the city was completely destroyed. Since that time Ayutthaya was never restored as a capital. Immense royal treasure was looted and princesses, harem, the clergy and even the foreigners were taken prisoners. Because of Chinese invasions the Myanma army was recalled soon after its victory over Ayutthaya.

The Chinese Invasions (1765-1769)

The Chinese made four attempts in four years in succession to attack Myanmar. There were three major causes of this invasion:

- (I) Frontier disputes. Borderline between Myanmar and China had never been completely settled. So many of the small settlements along the border paid homage to both the Chinese and Myanmar. Some chiefs, or Sawbaws on the Yunnan border stopped paying tribute to the Myanmar and, therefore, an army was sent to them and they fled into Yunnan. This was looked upon as an insult by the Chinese.
- (II) The Chinese were dissatisfied with the treatment that their merchants received in Myanmar. In 1765, a Chinese merchant was robbed at Bhamaw and another was killed at Kaungton. These were trifles and would have been adjusted if the two governments had an exchange of embassies.
- (III) The Sawbwas of Hsenwi, Bhamaw, Mogyaung and Kaungton promised to help the Chinese if they invaded Myanmar.

The First War (1765)

In 1765 Chinese invaded Myanmar and laid siege to Kaungton with 50,000 men and 10,000 horses. To raise the siege, Nay Myo Sithu was made Commander-in-chief and sent with 200 elephants, 2,000 horses and 20,000 men. On 27 December 1765 Nay Myo Sithu attacked the Chinese at Kaungton. The Chinese were defeated and over 10,000 Chinese were killed. After this Bala Min Din was sent to Kaungton to fortify the town against another possibility of a Chinese invasion.

The Second War (1766)

In 1766 December the Chinese came again with 250,000 men and 25,000 horses. Reinforcements and supplies were sent to Bala Min Din at Kaungton. To meet the invading army the King sent two generals along two routes. One was Nay Myo Sithu with 15,000 men and 300 war boats carrying cannons who came up the Ayeyawady river to Bhamaw. From west of the Ayeyawady river Maha Sithu had to take the land route with 200 elephants, 2000 horses and 80,000 men. The Chinese surrounded Kaungton, but they could not destroy the stockade built around the town. In the nick of time Nay Myo Sithu arrived. Within three days the Chinese had to withdraw.

The Third War (1767)

Again in November 1767, Mingjui, the son-in-law of the Chinese Emperor came through Hsenwi with 30,000 horses and 300,000 men. Another army of the same number was led by the brother of the Emperor and came by Thinza Nwe Lain route. Myaydu Min sent three armies to meet them. Maha Sithu was sent to meet the Chinese army with 300 elephants, 3000 horses and 30,000 men. Maha Thiha Thuya was sent with 200 elephants, 200 horses, 20,000 men from Bawgyo route to cut off the supplies being sent to the Chinese army. Letwe Winhmu (Keeper of the Left Palace Yard) was sent from Momeik with 100 elephants, 1,000 horses and 10,000 men to attack the rear of the Chinese forces.

Mingjui was the best of the Manchu generals and he had earlier had many successful campaigns especially in Turkistan. He easily defeated Maha Sithu and passed over Gokehteik gorge and came up to

Sin-gaung. Unfortunately for him, he did not get the whole-hearted support of his fellow officers. At the same time the Myanma closed up from his rear. Thus his support line was cut and he was forced to retreat. Even in his retreat Mingjui showed his bravery. When his troops were safe from the Myanma, he in accordance with the customs of the time, committed suicide. The Chinese emperor at that time was Chien Lung (1735-1795) of the Manchu or Chin (Qing) Dynasty. The glory of the Chinese empire was at its zenith during his reign. His Imperial Army had never been defeated except in Myanma. One of the most important causes of this failure was that the soldiers were attacked by fever and dysentery. The climate of Myanma was too severe for them. The total strength of the Myanma army was 60,000 men, 6,000 horses and 600 elephants.

The Fourth War (1768-1769)

Again in 1768, the Chinese came with 500,000 men and 50,000 horses. But the Myanma had only 62,000 men, 1200 horses and 100 elephants plus some Shan levies. Bala Min Din defended Kaungton. The Chinese built a stockade at Shwe Nyaung Bin, twelve miles away from Kaungton. The Chinese never succeeded in taking Kaungton. In 1769 they were driven out of their stockade at Shwe Nyaung Bin and their generals asked for terms of peace. Most of the Myanma officers wanted to refuse the terms because the Chinese were starving and would soon be compelled to surrender unconditionally. Some suggested that all of them should be killed. But Maha Thiha Thuya, (Commander-in-Chief) had the foresight that if the Myanma had refused mercy, the

Chinese at Shwe Nyaung Bin would all be killed but the Chinese Imperial Army may come down in bigger force with more cruel intentions. Thus Maha Thiha Thuya allowed a peaceful retreat after drawing up a written agreement between China and Myanma. By this agreement the Chinese were allowed to withdraw and to restore trade and to exchange the Decennial Mission (Envoys in Every Ten Years) to prevent further misunderstandings. The Chinese burnt their boats and melted their cannons and marched back by the Tapaing Pass and thousands perished on the way. The Chinese, however, took it as submission. In truth the Decennial Missions were not a tributary mission but it is possible that the Chinese chroniclers noted this down as tribute-bearing-missions. The great siege of Ayutthaya 1766-67 was not justifiable, but in the Chinese War the Myanma were waging a righteous war of defence against the invader.

Raid into Manipur

Myaydu Min was very angry when he heard that the Chinese were allowed to go back. The generals were afraid to return home. In order to please the king they went off to Manipur in January 1770. Manipur had now already recovered from the first devastation of 1759. Now the Commanders hoped to get prisoners and cattle to please the King. A battle was fought for nearly three days at a place called Langthabal and the Raja of Manipur fled into Assam. The Myanma generals appointed a new Raja and brought back many prisoners. The King was pleased of this victory and so he changed his intention to execute them for allowing the Chinese to go away in peace. Still he exiled them to the Shan States. After all these troubles, the dealings with China were resumed. The Chinese Emperor never acknowledged the

Myanma Treaty. But his silence gave consent and soon caravans poured down into Myanma from Yunnan bringing Chinese goods and in exchange bought Myanma cotton. The Chinese were skilful in cotton weaving. The Nine Shan Towns i.e. Koshanpye above Bhamaw, served as the frontier. About 2500 Chinese prisoners were brought down to Ava to serve as gardeners and craftsmen and were given Myanma wives.

The Revival of Thailand

The Myanma's control over Thailand was weak from the very beginning. Even when Ayutthaya was taken in 1765, a Thai Governor of Northern Thailand had refused to take the oath of allegiance. His name was Paya Tak, a Thai-Chinese of great energy. He and his followers withdrew into the jungles and went over to the east and took refuge in Kampuchea. The Thai people looked upon him as their leader, because all Thai princes were now prisoners in Myanma. In 1768 Paya Tak took back Ayutthaya and founded Bangkok as the capital and established a dynasty which is still ruling Thailand.

Many expeditions were sent against him. Heroes of the Chinese wars like Maha Thihathuya and Thihapati won occasional victories over him but none were of permanent nature. The Myanma generals were not as united in their activities as before and this allowed several chances for Paya Tak to succeed. By 1775, the Myanma were driven out of Thailand, and even in Chieng Mai, the Myanma power was in the wane.

Under Singu Min the only problem with a neighbouring state was the succession in Manipur. The Myanma generals had appointed a Raja at Manipur in 1770. Between 1775 and 1782 the rightful heir who took refuge in Assam made four attempts to regain his position. After 1782 he firmly established himself at Cachar. Singu Min did not trouble him any more as he paid a nominal tribute to Myanma. Singu Min stopped all wars. So the people were grateful to him.

Conquest of Rakhine

The last King Rakhine was Thamada (1782-85) and the country was in great disorder during his reign. He had had very little authority over the country. Some Lords of Rakhine came to Amarapura Court and asked help. On 16 October 1784, an order was passed to take Rakhine and 30,000 men under the Crown Prince invaded Rakhine in four divisions. The first Divisions went from Pa-aing Pass in Minbu district, the second Division from Padaung Pass in Pyay district, the third Division from Kyangin in Hinthada district, and the fourth Division carrying cannons and guns from Negrais by sea. They united on the west coast and took the Ramree island. Chiefs of the surrounding places submitted. The capital Mrauk U fell on 2 January 1785 and the king was captured on 20 January 1785. A Myanma Governor was appointed at Mrauk U with a troop of soldiers to help him and Thandwe, Cheduba and Ramree were made subprovinces under the Myanma Governor. In February 1785, the Myanma army withdrew from Rakhine taking the royal family and some 20,000 Rakhine people as prisoners. These Rakhine prisoners introduced inoculation against smallpox into Myanma. Among the spoil was a cannon 30 feet long and 30 bronze images from Ayutthaya.

Of these 30, six still survive at Maha Muni pagoda. Maha Muni was also taken from Mrauk U. About 125 Rakhine captives were dedicated as pagoda slaves at Maha Muni (now in Mandalay).

The Expedition to Thailand

Conquest over Rakhine convinced Badon Min that he was to become "Sakyawadae" (the World Conqueror). So he hoped of conquering China and India. As a prelude to his world conquest, he invaded Thailand in 1785-86. Thailand was attacked from four points simultaneously. One army with Shan Levies swept down from Chiang Mai. Another advanced up the Ataran River and through the Three Pagodas Pass in Mawlamyine District. The third army marched from Dawe to cut off Malayan support to the Thais. The fourth was to occupy important trading islands of Junkceylon, south of Bait, and to prevent firearms reaching Thailand. This plan of attack proved to be a failure. Paya Tak was dead but his spirit remained. The Thais stoutly defended their country. Except for Chiang Mai army, the remaining three met defeats. Badon Min was in command of the Three Pagodas Pass Route Army. He left his army to its fate and ran for his life to Yangon. His plan for a world conquest was shattered once and for all. This Thai Campaign shows the true nature of Badon Min. He himself had set shameful example of flight and he blamed the officers for the failure. Later campaigns against Thailand were either to get back the land taken by the Thais or to repulse a Thai attack. In 1803 Thai came up to Kengtang. In 1814 Mons of Madama rebelled and fled into Thailand. Within 1809 and 1811 Badon Min sent four times his army to Thailand to reclaim the lost population. He never regained Chiang Mai. These prolonged wars had a severe effect on the people

and the country. To add more on these troubles, cultivation failed during 1807 and 1816. There was a great shortage of food and death from hunger. Once during 1809 and 1811 an army of 36,000 was sent to Thailand and 8,000 died on the way from hunger and disease. The army devastated the villages on its way of march as if it were in an enemy land. A Myede Levy of 1,500 men was slow in the march and so the commander-in-chief sent a detachment and killed all of them. Men deserted wholesale and being afraid to return to their homes they became dacoits. A short stay of the army at Dawe made the town dead for many months and for years the fields around it were white with human bones.

The Chinese Embassies

According to peace terms of 1769 China and Myanma agreed to exchange envoys on every tenth year. This was the first effort made by Myanma for having a regular foreign relation. By this exchange of envoys, frontier disputes can be solved peacefully. Chinese Missions visited Myanma in 1787, 1790, 1795, 1796 and 1822. Myanma Missions went over to China in 1782, 1787, 1792 and 1823. Of these three missions reached Beijing. They exchanged prisoners, gifts and titles, etc. to court officers. Nevertheless the Chinese Emperor considered the Myanma King as his vassal though the Myanma King took great care that he should not be regarded as such. The 1790 Mission brought back a replica of Buddha's tooth from China. The receipt of this tooth made Badon Min think that he was mightier than Bagan Anawyatha, who failed to get the tooth from China. The Mission also brought back some Yunanese girls for the King's harem, and Badon Min accepted them as the grand-daughters of the Chinese Emperor who sent them in respect of his power.

The Conquest of Assam

Mainpur was again disturbed by a civil war and one leader Marjit Singh requested Myanma help and consequently Badon Min sent an army in 1812-1813. After heavy fighting the Myanma army defeated all oppositions and put Marjit Singh on the throne. As a reward of this service the Kabaw Valley was given to Myanma. Assam of Ahon Shan Kingdom was also in disorder. In 1805 at the request of some rebel leaders, Myanma troops marched twice into that country, but they left on both times after receiving heavy bribes. The Governor of Assam fled to Calcutta and asked the British help. But the British refused to interfere. Then he came to Myanma with a similar request and Badon Min promised help. Thus in 1816 a troop of 8,000 men together with another 8,000 Manipur levies marched into Assam. They reinstated the Governor and withdrew taking a large booty including 50 elephants and a daughter for Badon Min. From that time onwards, Myanma became a threat to the English in east India. Troubles along the western border of Myanma eventually led to three wars with the English and the fall of the Konbaung dynasty which also means the loss of Myanma national independence.

The English-Myanma Relations

Alaung-mintaya came into first contact with Europeans when he took Dagon (Yangon). He seized three English ships and took their guns and ammunitions but captain Jackson protested under International Law that they were neutrals and therefore the guns should be returned. Alaung-mintaya was in need of powerful weapons and he hoped to get them from the English. French agent Bourno was living at Tanyin and he openly assisted the Mons with his three ships. When Jackson was given back his guns he went over to Tanyin and joined the Mons. Bombardment from European ships destroyed many of the Myanma war boats. When Tanyin was taken Bourno and his sailors were executed but all Englishmen escaped to Nagayit Kyun, (Negrais). One English Captain Baker arrived at Shwebo in September 1755 to ask a treaty of friendship with the Myanma. He brought as presents, one looking glass, one twelve pounder cannon and three nine pounder cannons together with powder and shots and he gave some excuse for the outrageous acts done by Jackson. Alaung-mintaya sent Baker away without signing the treaty but when Alaung-mintaya reached Myanaung on 22 July 1757, Ensign Robert Lester came to meet the king and the treaty was signed on 24 July 1757.

By that treaty the English Company was allowed to fortify the island of Nagayit (Negrais) and to trade free of duty and in return the English Company promised to send yearly one twelve pounder cannon and 200 viss of powder. The Company was also given a site in Pathein to build a factory.

The French Company from Pondicherry sent three ships to help captain Bourno and his men at Tanyin. But they came too late. Alaung-mintaya had already taken Tanyin and Bourno and his followers were taken prisoners. Alaung-mintaya forced Bourno to write a letter to the captains of three ships and therefore he was able to capture easily the ships, except one which escaped. From this capture Alaung-mintaya got thirty five twenty pounder cannons, five field guns, 1300 muskets and a large store of powder and shots. Bruno and his fellow officers were executed but Alaung-mintaya spared the lives of over two hundred French sailors. These French sailors served under Alaung-mintaya as gunners. For instance one Chevalier Milard was made Captain of the Guard and served Alaung-mintaya in his campaigns against Bago, Ayutthaya and Manipur. He was given the title of Thiriyazathu Kyaw Htin and made Myosa of Tabe in Sagaing District. He died in 1788. His tomb is still at Sagaing.

Since 1753, the English East India Company occupied Nagayit (Negrais) and Alaung-mintaya gave them a permission to fortify it in 1757. The Company was very busy in India at that time and therefore it withdrew the Negrais, settlement on 13 May 1759. But after some months, i.e. in October 1759, a small staff was sent back to Negrais to maintain their foot hold there. The Governor of Pathein with 100 followers went to greet them. On the next day, 6 October 1759, at about 9 o'clock in the morning, while Myanma and English officers were taking breakfast together some 2000

armed men suddenly appeared and attacked the English and their Indian followers. Eight Englishmen and about a hundred Indians were killed four Englishmen were taken prisoners out one Englishmen and sixty four Indians escaped by ship. The said armed men, after taking cannons and stores, set fire to the entire settlement. The cause of this trouble was as follow. Some Armenians who held high offices under Alaung-mintaya were jealous of English success in eastern trade. One Armenian called Gregory gave a false report to Alaung-mintaya that the English were fortifying their stations, giving fire arms in the Mons and preventing other traders from coming up the Patheir river. Alaung-mintaya ordered that Negrais must be wiped out.

In September 1760, an envoy from the East India Company under Captain Alves arrived at Sagaing to the King. The Company was very busy in India and therefore did not want to have any more trouble with Myanma. But this envoy was sent to claim compensation for the Negrais massacre. Tabayin Min replied that he had nothing to do with it. He regarded the 1757 treaty as non-exist. Myanma Kings usually considered that a death of a king put an end to the treaty he had entered. Because no Myanma King had such treaty dealings before and therefore did not know the nature of a treaty. But out of sheer mercy, the King released half a dozen of English prisoners. He also allowed trade but the English Company must pay duties. He granted sites but not allowed to establish the English headquarters again at the Negrais. So, the English flocked to Yangon. In return to this grace of the King, the English had to supply with arms and ammunitions. The King refused to sign a treaty. So it was not a treaty, but only a grant by the King which may be disallowed at short notice. It depended upon the King's pleasure entirely.

English Missions

From 1795 the British India Government began to send political missions to Myanmar. Before that the English missions were only of commercial nature. Envoys such as Baker were more concession seekers. The change in the nature of missions was due to -

- (1) Myanmar expansion west,
- (2) English demand for Myanmar teak to build ships in Calcutta, and
- (3) French desire to use Myanmar as a base to attack the English in India.

The English had learnt a lesson that French had helped the Americans to gain independence during 1777 and 1783. They did not want that being repeated in the east. Myanmar relied for information on international affairs on Armenian and Mohamedan merchants who were jealous of the English success in India. Badon Min, on the other hand, thought that an alliance with some India princes against the English might be of some use. He sent various missions to Delhi, Lahore etc. in 1807, 1808, 1813, 1817, 1820 and 1825 under the pretension of pilgrimage. But when the English government found that they tried to communicate with the Maratha chiefs who were most eager to oppose the English, they were stopped and sent back. Unfortunately they came one year late. Their intended allies were already crushed by the English and many Indian Rajas some of whom were much wealthier and stronger than the Myanmar King were in subordinate alliance with the British. The envoys knew correctly that English in India was much more stronger than the Myanmar but they were afraid to tell the truth to their King. English envoys came to Myanmar with sepoy escorts

and rich presents. Captain Symes came in 1795 with three objects, etc.

- (1) to get trade concessions
- (2) to ensure civil treatment to shipwreck sailors and
- (3) to open up diplomatic relations by allowing an English political agent reside in Yangon.

Symes got all these things written on paper which was not a treaty as he wanted. They were in the form of favours from the Kings and shall be withdrawn at pleasure. Symes was impressed by the Myanma generosity and he wrote a report which was too good to believe. That report seriously misled his government. Captain Cox was sent as the Yangon political agent in 1797, when Cox went up to the Capital to suggest that the Myanma Court should also send an agent to Calcutta he was kept waiting for nine months. This mission was a complete failure. His report said quite the contrary of what Symes had reported before. So the British India government thought that Cox had done a mistake and therefore it sent a letter to the Myanma court saying that it would send another officer who would be more amenable. In 1802 Captain Symes came again but he was treated in very much the same way as Captain Cox. The King did not even allow him an audience and so his mission was also a sad failure. Captain Canning came in 1803, 1809 and 1811. During royal audiences the King expressed that he could only deal with His Britannic Majesty because he deemed it below his dignity to deal with a mere "Bingala Myosa" i.e. Viceroy of India. The Myanma Court expressed its regret that the English were so ignorant to know such simple protocol. If the mission came direct from England it will be a dealing "King to King" and all would be well. Bingala Myosa should

deal with Yangon Myosa. So Canning did not even leave Yangon when he came the third time. The King ordered the Yangon Myosa to capture Canning but Canning escaped in his ship called the *Malaba* which was a cruiser of 54 guns. Yangon Myosa was punished for his failure to arrest Canning.

First Anglo-Myanmar War (1824-26)

Remote Causes

(1) Conquest of Manipur

In 1813 Myanmar put Marjit Singh on the throne of Manipur. His rival brother whose name was Gamber Singh fled to Cachar. Marjit Singh was a blood thirsty tyrant and he soon forgot the gratitude he owed to Myanmar. At the coronation of Sagaing Min he failed to appear with tributes. So in 1819 the Myanmar overran Manipur again. Marjit Singh fled into Cachar and his brother forgave him. But soon they quarrelled again and Myanmar help was invited. So in 1824 the Myanmar troops advanced into Cachar and declared Cachar to be their protectorate.

(2) Conquest of Assam

The Myanmar had reinstated a rebel Governor of Assam in 1816. He was soon killed and Raja Chandrakant was also deposed. So Myanmar came in 1816 and reinstated Raja Chandrakant but the Raja himself was afraid of the Myanmar fury and fled into the English territory. The English protected him and refused to hand him over. So the Myanmar carried away 30,000 people as prisoners from Assam. This conquest powerfully effected the imagination of the Myanmar that they surely would become world conquerors. They would be happy to fight and

suppress the English. War policy became popular and this brought the Myanma into direct conflict with the English in India.

Events Leading up to the War

Myanma frontier guards were stationed at the Naaf Estuary (Rakhine Chittagoung frontier). They often fired on the English subjects coming near them. So in February 1823 the English stationed a troop at the island of Shahpuri (Shinmapyugyun) to protect their subjects. Suddenly at night on 23 September 1823, 1,000 Myanma swam to the island and killed about twelve Sepoys there and next the Myanma garrisoned the island. The Viceroy of India, Lord Amherst, wrote a letter of protest which the King ignored. It was not the King who dragged the people into war but it was the people who led the king into war with the English. The Myanma troops prepared to attack Chittagong in January 1824. The king moved the capital from Amarapura to Ava on 3 March 1824. The Viceroy declared a formal state of war with Myanma on 5 March 1824.

The War of 1824

Myanma entered the war very willingly. On the English side it was the worst managed war ever fought in the English military history. But the main campaign itself was excellent. A sea borne expedition was sent to capture Yangon and then to march up to the capital of Ava. It was beyond the imagination of Myanma that a seaborne troop was possible and so they neglected the defence of the delta. There were certain peculiarities about the war.

- (1) The war started late in summer to be followed soon by a rainy season during which major operations would be impossible. The time was selected on the

advice of Captain Canning and it proved disastrous. It would be much better if the strength at Chittagoung was reinforced and remained only defensive until the end of monsoon when a sea borne expedition was to land at Yangon.

(II) There was no adequate preparation for supplies, etc. for a rainy time operation. Campbell led the expedition to Yangon and the town was taken easily on 10 May 1824. But more soldiers were killed by malaria and dysentery. Soldiers had to eat salted meat with biscuits which had to be soaked in hot water to clear it of weevils. This diet in Myanma killed many Europeans and even Indians. Of the original 11,000 men, of which 5,000 were Europeans, only a few hundred were fit for operation only after a few weeks during their six months' stay at Yangon. They "died like flies". They thought that Myanma was a land of plenty and fresh meat and vegetables would be obtainable easily. It had proved just the contrary.

(III) Many campaign were ill-conceived and ill-managed. The English thought that Mons of the delta would welcome them and help them when they occupied Yangon. With the help from Mons they hoped to have an easy transport up the Ayeyawady to Ava. But this hope was not realised. Mons were too few and weak to offer any good service to them.

(IV) The English assumed that the fall of Yangon might induced Sagaing Min to ask for peace. But the King never knew the truth that Yangon was so easily taken and that badly equipped and disciplined Myanma troops were no match for the English troops.

(V) Though the Myanma troops were no match for the English troops in open fightings they were adepts

in jungle fighting and extremely clever in building up earthworks and stockades. They were also extremely mobile.

The capture of Yangon was a complete surprise to them. The main Myanma force was under Bandula in Rakhine on its way to Calcutta. But the fall of Yangon stopped him. When Kyiwungyi failed to stop the invaders at Yangon, Bandula was recalled from Manipur on 30 August 1824. More titles and honours were given to him and he was directed to drive the English out to sea. He believed that he would soon be able to accomplish it. He marched to Yangon with 60,000 men with an artillery detachment. He took up a semicircular position from Kyimyindine to Pazundaung and his front line was well protected by earthworks.

The English had at first 11,000 men i.e. 5,000 Europeans and 6,000 Sepoys. Now sickness and death had reduced it to 3,800 i.e. 1,300 Europeans and 2,500 Sepoys. Their key position was on the platform of Shwedagon where twenty one guns were mounted. Warships operating on the Yangon River and Pazundaung Chaung also fired on the Myanma earthworks. On 1 December 1824 Bandula directed his main attack on Shwedagon. But the Myanma were repulsed. Therefore Bandula concentrated his forces at Kokine near the present University of Yangon. The English soldiers attacked it in a few days later and so Bandula with 7,000 best soldiers retreated to Danubyu. The English reinforcements came and Campbell, Commander-in-Chief, marched up the Ayeyawady river. Bandula while directing operation at Danubyu was killed by a bomb shell on 1 April 1825. His whole army fled in disorder. The English marched right up to Pyay and very easily took the town and there at Pyay, the English decided to stop all active operations for the rest of the rainy season. It was during these times that another two

expeditions were coming into Myanma from the West and North West. One expedition drove out the Myanma from Assam and Manipur. Ex-Raja, Gumbheer Singh of Manipur carried out this difficult task even during the rains with the help of some English officers. In February 1826, no more Myanma were left in Assam and Manipur. Another campaign started under Morrison in January 1825 to push the Myanma out of Rakhine. On 2 April 1826 the old capital Maruak-U was easily taken from the defending force of about 9,000 Myanma. Then Morrison moved down to take Thandwe and Cheduba. The whole operation finished in April. But heavy rainfall and diseases almost crippled the English forces that they had to withdraw as if in defeat.

On 2 October 1825, Kyiwungyi came to meet Campbell at Nyaung Bin Zeik, 25 miles north of Pyay to ask for terms of peace. The English demanded the cession of Rakhine, Taninthayi, Assam and Manipur together with an indemnity of one crore of rupees (one million sterling pounds). The Myanmar Court sent an American Baptist Missionary Dr. Price and Assistant Surgeon Sandford (War Prisoner) to negotiate. But the English stuck to their original demands and marched on. Finally, the invaders came to up Yandabo about 45 miles south of Ava, the then capital. Price was sent for the third time with 25 lakhs of rupees as a first instalment of the indemnity and to inform the English that the Myanma Court would meet all the demands without exception. All European prisoners including Mr. and Mrs. Judson, Gouger and many others were set free. On 24 February 1826 the Yandabo Treaty was signed.

The Yandabo Treaty

This treaty is the first document that sealed the great humiliation of Myanmar before the foreign invader. Myanmar had suffered many defeats before, e.g. Mongul invasion of the 13th century, Shan domination of the 16th century and Mon conquest of the 18th century but none were of permanent nature. Myanmar revived after the first thrust of their military exploit but now Myanmar had to meet an empire builder who annexed the land and intended to extend further with the help of higher military skill and better organised administration. The following are the terms of Yandabo:-

- (1) The King of Myanmar must surrender Rakhine, Assam and Taninthayi to the English East India Company.
- (2) The King of Myanmar had to promise that he would not interfere any more in the affairs of Manipur, Cachar and Jaintia.
- (3) The King of Myanmar must pay the indemnity of one crore of rupees in four equal instalments within four years.
- (4) A British Resident should be allowed to stay at Ava with fifty soldiers as Body Guard and a Myanmar Resident should likewise stay permanently at Calcutta so that the two countries may have smooth relations in all matters affecting trade and frontier demarcation.
- (5) Thailand must also be considered as a party to this treaty (as an ally of the English).
- (6) A commercial treaty must also be entered upon separately and at once.

Thus Myanma lost most of her sea coast and her northeastern provinces. "The loss of face" was enormous. The English won the victory at a heavy cost. The total number of men used in all the campaigns was 40,000. Out of these about 15,000 died i.e. 37%. Of this 37% only 4% was lost in battle and the rest died of sickness. It was the direct result of bad planning, i.e. to start the war in March, to continue fighting during the rain, to ignore arrangements for transport of food supply, and to make adequate precautions against sickness. Thus the war was unnecessarily lengthened for about two years and the expenditure totalled 13 million sterling pounds. The English considered this a large sum of money for a war against a country like Myanma. Calcutta administration was to be blamed for all these and had it not been for the help of Munro, Governor of Madras, the losses may be much higher. Viceroy Lord Anherst was severely criticised in England. On the other hand, the war revealed the great weakness of the Myanma. From Alaung-mintaya until then for nearly seventy years, the Myanma had adopted and expansionist and aggressive policy. They fought several wars almost continuously. The Kings and their ministers were utterly ignorant of world situation and they likewise were ignorant of the urgent needs for national consolidation through good administration and sound economy. The wars together with corrupt administration had reduced the country into almost a ruin. It was impossible for a country like this to withstand the English imperialism. Only good diplomacy and some grant of concessions as the King of Thailand and some Rajas of India had done, could save a country from loss of independence. Since this first Anglo-Myanma War the English knew that they could annex the whole country easily at any time under any pretext. The only problem was to pacify the country after annexation.

The Significances of the War

The prolongation of the war for nearly two years was unusual for the English which often fought with the Indian native princess. No Indian power could stand the English attack for two years and never had they suffered such heavy losses. Therefore, there was a rumour in India that the East India Company was falling down. The English lost a great deal of prestige in India. The Yandabo Treaty did not deal with the frontier question. Therefore, more disputes had yet to arise out of the English conquest of Assam, Manipur, Rakhine and Taninthayi. The English ambition was to possess the whole stretch of sea coast from Chittagoung to Singapore. They had acquired Malaya and Singapore from the Dutch in 1824. So it was quite natural that they wanted to snatch off the sea coast of Myanma. But Assam and Taninthayi proved simply a mare drain on the Indian revenue. The cost of administration was never covered up by the revenue they received from these places. Right up 1831, the English were anxious to sell back Taninthayi or to exchange it with some good port of the Ayeyarwady delta. But the Myanma Government could not hear of it. It wanted to get back these places free. Ultimately, Rakhine developed into a good rice land and Taninthayi developed into a mining area as well as teak land supplying timber for building ships in Calcutta dockyards. Myanma expansion was definitely put to an end and the English chance to annex the whole country or to turn it into a subsidiary state became possible. France was also extending its influence in the east of mainland Southeast Asia and therefore the English must work quick in Myanma to prevent it being included in the French sphere of influence. The English Company appointed Lieutenant Commissioners to govern Rakhine and Taninthayi. These Commissioners were complete autocrats responsible only to the Viceroy of India. The lands they ruled were called

'Non Regulation Provinces'. The English East India Company hoped that the English trade in Myanma would be improved after the war but this hope was not realised. Because the great port of Yangon was still in the hands of the Myanma who had little regard for foreign trade. The people as a whole were anti-foreign in their sentiments so that they refused to deal direct with the English merchants. Thus the English trade did not prosper as they had expected. Their attempt to develop Kyaik Khami (Ahmerst) as a sea port of Myanma utterly failed. Because Kyaik Khami has no good hinterland as Yangon. The English attempted to open diplomatic relations with Myanma also failed. The King could not forget the great humiliation he has suffered in the hands of the English and therefore he grew suspicious of all Europeans and avoided even to have some informal talks with them. The importance of Yandabo Treaty was also minimised as much as possible. The national pride of the Myanma cannot make them understand that such a treaty might be binding for them for a long time. They were desirous of making another attempt to throw off the English presence in their country. The treaty was also a work of military officers who had had little knowledge of politics and diplomacy. Therefore the treaty had many loopholes through which Myanma officers often found ways to haggle the terms of the treaty. No frontiers were defined in the treaty and therefore there were no end of disputes.

Mission to India (1824-1828)

Sagaing Min sent two political mission to India. The first mission was in 1824-1828. The Envoy was led by two officers with one hundred armed followers. Both officers were not Ayaybine (having plenipotentiary power). One was a Atwin Wun (Private Secretary) and the other was a Ye Wun (Port Officer). They proceeded to Calcutta to see the Governor General. Myanmar had failed to give the indemnity in instalment at an appointed time and therefore a rumour was current that the English will capture Yangon very soon. Myanmar officers wanted to appease the British Officers at Calcutta. Secondly Myanmar wanted to get back the Kabaw valley which was once a territory of Myanmar. It was now under Gambheer Singh. Thirdly some villages in the west of Patheingyi district were mistakenly occupied by the English as part of Rakhine. Myanmar wanted to get back these villages. The Governor-General directed the Envoys to go and meet Campbell, the Commissioner of Tanintharyi and Campbell was instructed to promise nothing except that an enquiry commission would consider the frontier disputes and that Myanmar were expected to pay all the indemnity within one and a half year. Thus, the Envoys had to come back to Mawlamyine to meet Campbell. The instructions did not reach Mawlamyine in time. Campbell told the Envoys that Kabaw valley could not be returned. He also demanded the speedy release of the English subjects that the Myanmar had captured and that the indemnity must be given in full within six months. Thus, the Envoys came back to Ava without achieving anything.

The Second Mission (1830-1833)

The second mission went in 1830-33. Major Henry Burney arrived in Ava on 17 June 1830 and it was with his advice that the Myanma Envoys went to Calcutta. He hoped that they would come back with words of warning that the English should not be trifled with. Maung Shwe and Maung Pyo led the envoy to India. Firstly they talked about the return of Kabaw valley and some villages on the Than Lwin River which the English had mistakenly taken as part of Taninthayi. Secondly they asked the withdrawal of the British Residency from the Myanma Court. These Envoys went by land route to Sittway through the Ann Pass and from there they sailed to Calcutta arriving there in December 1830. The Governor-General was not at Calcutta. So the Myanma Envoys followed him to Delhi. But on Burney's advice the Governor-General delayed purposely to grant them audience. They waited for ten months. They were finally given an interview in November 1831. But the Governor-General refused to transact any business with them and asked them to go back to Calcutta promising that he would follow. The Envoys returned to Calcutta in March 1832 and they were greatly depressed. Meanwhile, Burney and Mingy (Commissioner of Taninthayi) returned to Calcutta. Burney, Mingy and the Governor-General discussed about the frontier disputes and largely through Burney's influence they decided to return the Kabaw valley to Myanma. With this good news Myanma Mission returned to Ava. The Mission cost 20,000 rupees a year and they were away for more than two years. It was a heavy expense for Myanma and it far exceeded the revenues of Kabaw valley. The great object of the Mission was to remove the British Residency from Ava and it failed to have it realized. However, the King and the people were greatly interested in the black marble image of Buddha which

the Envoy brought from India and received at Ava on 19 September 1833. The Envoys had noticed in India something of the English strength and industry which were unknown to Myanma before. But they left this most important information in their report at home.

The British Residents in Ava

John Crawford (1826-27)

Under article 7 of the Treaty of Yandabo, one British officer with fifty armed followers was allowed to remain permanently at the Myanma Court to act as an Agent of the British India Government. All dealings between the English merchants and the Myanma Court must pass through him. This officer was called a Resident and his office Residency. As the capital moved from Amarapura to Ava on 3 March 1824, John Crawford was the first British Resident at Ava. He was sent with the main object of contracting a commercial treaty with Myanma. This was also one of the objects of the Yandabo Treaty. The Yandabo Treaty said that a separate commercial treaty must also be concluded at once. So Crawford was sent in 1826 to carry out this purpose. Crawford employed Mr. Judson as his interpreter on condition that he would try and obtain permission from the Myanma King to allow Judson preach Christianity in Myanma. Crawford drafted a treaty of 22 articles. The King deputed commissioners to discuss the question and during the discussion seventeen of the clauses had to be dropped. Because the Myanma officers considered them not to be of real commercial interest. Thus the final treaty had only five articles. The articles were-

- (1) freedom of mutual trade i.e. both India and Myanma shall not hinder the progress of inter-state trade;
- (2) removal of restrictions on both the ingress and regress of gold and silver;
- (3) fixing the port duties;
- (4) allow merchants to go anywhere as they like in the country and allow them to take away their families when they leave the country, and
- (5) extend assistance and protection to shipwreck sailors.

The Myanma Commission refused to agree the export of precious metals and to allow the families of merchant to leave Myanma. Crawford tried his best to secure these two concessions but he failed. The remaining clauses were agreed upon and signed. The Myanma Commission also made some claims against the British. Myanma claims were;

- (1) Madama district as occupied by the British as part of Taninthayi was wrong and therefore that piece of land must be returned to Myanma,
- (2) if possible, the Myanma King desired the return of Rakhine and Taninthayi without any thing to be given in exchange,
- (3) the Kabaw valley now under Gamber Singh must be returned to Myanma the rightful owner; and
- (4) postpone indefinitely the payment of the remaining instalment of the indemnity as the country has not yet recovered fully from the effects of war.

All these four items were strictly of political nature. Crawford excused himself that he came here to discuss on commerce and therefore had no authority to discuss politics.

In the meanwhile a large number of people from Manipur and Assam were captured by Myanma for slavery. Crawford demanded their release because they were now British subjects. But Myanma told him that this subject on slavery had nothing to do with commerce. Thus nonplussed, Crawford left Ava on 12 December 1826. But he remained at Yangon for sometime. Crawford was severely criticised by the supreme council of the Governor-General but the Governor-General supported all his actions. Crawford said that for any British officers to become a Resident at Ava shall experience a difficulty little better than on honourable confinement. He did not recommend to have a permanent residency in Myanma because people could not appreciate the value of its existence.



Henry Burney (1830-38)

Henry Burney was born in India of British parents. He had a good personality and he had some love for Asiatics. He joined the army and was a Captain when he came to Myanma. Before coming to Myanma, he was a political agent in Thailand. He crushed the rebellion at Dawe in 1829. His military career as well as his diplomatic success in Thailand were very much appreciated by the Governor-General. He was considered the best Englishman of the time to understand the Asiatics. Thus, he was entrusted with the Residency in Myanma. He was outspoken, honest and conscientious. Therefore, although he was respected by the Indian Government, he was not very much liked. He was not afraid to point out the mistakes done by the Indian Government. At the Court of Ava he soon became a personagrate i.e. the favourite of the Court. He was one of the greatest British personalities of the time on diplomatic relations. Yet he was unjustly neglected by his people to praise

him as he deserved. He was worn out by his service in Myanma and died at the age of fifty in 1845. When he came to Myanma he had ten objectives. They were:

- (1) to expedite the payment of the fourth or the last instalment of the indemnity;
- (2) to settle the boundaries of the Kabaw Valley, Patheingyi District, Madaya District and to determine to whom the island of Bilugyun belongs
- (3) to deal cautiously i.e. with care not to lower the English prestige in persuading the Court of Ava to take back Tanintharyi in exchange of some places in the Ayeyawady Delta or to pay cash or it because revenues of Tanintharyi could not meet the cost of administration there;
- (4) to expose the Myanma responsibility for frontier raids, i.e. dacoits from the Myanma side frequently visited the English side and there was the allegation that the Myanma Governors along the frontier either encouraged or ignored these raids,
- (5) to open a land route from Sittway to Ava either through the Ann Pass or Taunggyoke pass for trade mail or military use and to survey the trails possibly by Burney himself;
- (6) to act as a spokesman of all foreign merchants in Myanma on presenting their complaints and asking redress,
- (7) to find means of promoting the English trade in Myanma;
- (8) to study the political and social condition of Myanma;

- (9) to try his best to appease the king and his Court for the maintenance of peace, and
- (10) to convince the King and his Court the benefits of a regular diplomatic relation.

He was also directed not to interfere in the domestic affairs of Myanma and to withdraw the Residency if necessary (using his own discretion). Burney was well received at Yangon and he arrived at Ava on 17 June 1830. Several problems were kept pending against his arrival and Myanma officers were happy that he came. Primarily they would like to discuss the return of Rakhine and Taninthayi. Burney was subjected to kowtow. Later Residents refused to do so. This question came to be known as "the shoe question".

Policy Burney



Burney tried to make friends with the nobles as well as the royal princes. He sent gifts to all important persons of the Court and invited the ministers to dinner from time to time. He visited the King often and tried to please him. In return he was invited to most of the festivities of the Court. During these visits, he was to endure all the inconvenience to remain bareheaded, to sit on knees and to walk without shoes. Because the Myanma Court manners disallowed using hat, umbrella, footwear and sitting upright in the King's presence. The King soon tolerated his presence but he was discouraged to talk politics. Sagaing Min would never forget the humiliation he received from the English-Myanma war of 1824-1826. The very presence of the Residency unpleasant to his taste. No complaints were ever put to the British Resident by Myanma officers because to them the Residency had no use. It was only the British who had the most complaints. Burney tried his best to balance this situation by making himself as useful as possible to the King and his Court as an

advisor. Myanma, however decided for isolation from the outer world, At the same time, they wanted to prevent another British invasion. But unfortunately Myanma ministers had no real power to settle things using their own discretion. Every matter of importance was referred to the King and if the ministers thought that it might incur the royal displeasure, they refused to take up at all. Therefore Burney tried to make the presence of the British Residency a necessity to the Myanma Government. He advised the Indian Government to deal very high-handedly with Ava so that he would have a chance to stop in immediately to make things smooth and easy so that the King would desire the Residency to stay. Indisputably, it was one of the objects of the English to turn Myanma into a vassal state or to force the country into a subsidiary alliance. Otherwise, the country was doomed to be annexed into the British Empire. But Myanma were not aware of such a situation. If the King had meekly submitted to a subsidiary alliance, the territorial integrity of the country might have been preserved. After some years of Residency in Ava, Burney realised that his policy had failed badly, especially when Thayawady Min came to the throne. Burney advised his Government to withdraw the Residency and annex the country immediately. He said that there was no way out. But the Governor-General refused to accept his advice. And Burney was quite right because the Residency was withdrawn in 1848 and a war was declared in 1852. The first problem that Burney tackled was the Kabaw valley problem. It was a narrow strip of land situated between River Chindwin and Manipur. It was bounded by a range of mountains on all sides. It was the bone of contention between Myanma and Manipuris and as such it often changed hand. By 1824, it was under the Myanma. But the English returned it to the Raja of Manipur.

when Myanma was defeated in the War of 1824-1826. This Kabaw question was not entered in the Treaty of Yandabo. The Myanma had therefore every right to claim it back.

In 1830 the Indian Government decided that the valley should not be returned to Myanma. Sagaing Min was very angry and he even thought of using force to get it back. But his ministers persuaded him to wait till Burney arrived. Economically the valley was almost useless. But it is a matter of prestige that Myanma wanted it back. Burney recommended its return secretly to his government though he made no promise to Myanma that it would be returned ultimately. He simply advised to send a mission to Calcutta. The object was to let these envoys learn the Company's power in India. While Myanma envoys were still at Calcutta, he went back to meet the Viceroy and explained to him how it would be expedient to give it back. The King would be pleased and good relations might have developed out of it. The Viceroy did not readily took this advice but after some deliberation he said it would be returned. As a compensation, the Raja of Manipur was given a permanent stipend of Rs. 50 per month which his successors are still drawing. When Upper Myanma was annexed in 1885, the Raja claimed back the valley but he was not successful.



Indemnity

The first instalment of 25 lakhs was paid at Yandabo before the treaty was signed on 24 February 1826 and then the invading enemies withdraw to Yangon. The second instalment was paid on 9 December 1826, and the English troops moved from Yangon to Mawlamyine. These two instalments were quickly paid by Myanma as they wanted to clear the country off the foreign invaders. But they refused to pay the third and fourth instalments on the fixed dates of

payment. The third instalment was not paid till 14 July 1828. But Myanma explained that could not pay the last instalment as the country was too poor to afford it.

Soon after Burney arrived in Ava on 17 June 1830 he asked that the fourth instalment be paid as quickly as possible. The remaining indemnity was twelve lakhs of rupees and it was Burney's duty to put pressure upon the ministers for its speedy payment. The Myanma officers forced the people to pay for it. But a greater percentage of the collected money went into their pockets. Meanwhile, a dispute arose as to the quality of silver. Myanma were not using coins at that time. Therefore the English demand for one crore of rupees was equivalent to 75,000 viss of good silver. But there were 36 kinds of silver in use in Myanma and among them the two types, Ywetni and Dain were the best. But Dain was 25% superior to Ywetni. Hitherto it was understood that Dain should be paid. But Myanma Officers wanted to pay in Ywetni. 60,716 viss in Dain were already paid. If this silver to be converted into Ywetni, it would become 75,885 viss. The initial demand was 75,000. Therefore, Myanma Officers said that they have paid 885 viss in excess. Instead of paying the fourth instalment they demanded that the English shall repay 885 viss. Lengthy discussions followed. Finally Burney threatened that if it was not paid at once he would retire. Myanma knew that his retirement would be followed by a declaration of war soon. Yet Myanma gave no reply. So he packed up his belongings and came down to Yangon. On his way he was recalled and was given promise of payment. Thus the last instalment was paid after seven long years on 4 February 1833. This indemnity was a great burden to the people and at the same time it

produced ill feeling against the English. The method of collection was cruel and a large percentage of silver given by the people was used in the payment of indemnity.

Other Frontier Disputes

The Yandabo Treaty failed to define clearly the boundaries. Therefore frontier disputes welled up. Myanma frontier officers had no real control over the people of the frontier areas and being too far away from the capital, these officers acted as if they were independent rulers. In some cases the frontier officers co-operated with the dacoits and shared their loot. Mostly the dacoits encamped their base within the Myanma territory and raided into the English territories. Many complaints came from the English Commissioner at Taninthayi. But the Myanma Government ignored them. So in 1829, one English troop chased the dacoits right into the Myanma territory and burnt down Madama and surrounding villages as the Governor of Madama was suspected to be in alliance with the dacoits. This was the violation of Yandabo Treaty by the English and therefore the Myanma Government had a good cause to put up the complaint. Meanwhile the Commissioner of Rakhine made a complaint that the raiders from the Myanma side frequently visited his lands. But the Myanma Government was not in a position to stop it. The inroads of the dacoits from one territory into another continued until the whole country was taken by the English in 1885. The first Commissioner at Mawlamyine was Sir Archibald Campbell. He was succeeded by Mingy and then by Blundell. Blundell was strongly in favour of war against Myanma. But the Indian Government was cautious. The territory of the Taninthayi was so bare of resources and scanty of population that it did not repay enough for the expense of the administration. Every

year, the Indian Government had to use rupees one and a half lakh extra on it. They were keeping it at a loss. So in 1828, the Board of Control decided to give it up. First it was suggested to sell it to Thailand. But Thailand was not willing to buy it. Secondly it was thought to create it into an independent Mon State. But there was no one to guarantee its security. Thirdly it was to return it to Sagaing Min. If he was willing to pay a certain amount of money or to exchange with a sea port in the delta, he might get it back. Burney tried to persuade the Myanma Government to take it back but it refused to do so. Finally orders arrived from England in March 1833 that Taninthayi must be kept at any cost. The Indian Government wanted to open a land route from Sittway to Ava for trade and diplomatic reasons. In September 1830, Burney opened the Ann Pass route but it was found that the sea route via Yangon was easier and therefore the project was abandoned. Burney had frequently asked the Myanma Government to fix the customs duty and therefore it was fixed in 1830 by the King's order. Import duty was 10% for the King and $\frac{1}{2}\%$ for the Officers on the value of things imported. Export duty was 4 annas and one tenth of a basket of rice (7.5 lbs) per maund (82½ lbs). In November 1830, export on rubies was $5\frac{1}{2}\%$ of the price plus a piece of muslim and a plate of sugar to be given to each Atwin Wun. Every person leaving by boat had to pay one tenth tickle of silver and one tenth of a basket of rice (7.5 lbs).

In 1837, being afraid that Minthagyi might usurp the throne, Prince Thayawady withdrew to Shwebo and raised the standard of rebellion. Burney declared strict neutrality, but from time to time he gave sound advices to Sagaing Min and offered his good office for negotiations. He went up to Shwebo to meet the rebel Prince. Ultimately Sagaing Min surrendered and Thayawady Min became King on 8 April

1837 and the credit went to Burney for the speedy conclusion of this rebellion. Next year i.e. in 1838, Burney went back to India.

Richard Benson (1837-1839)

Burney left Ava by the middle of 1837. Because the new King refused to recognise Burney as a diplomatic officer though he allowed him to remain in capital. Burney interpreted this as a violation of the Yandabo Treaty and an insult to the English nation. Thus he recommended that the Residency be closed and a war be declared immediately. Anyhow the Indian Government was not yet ready to take up Myanmar problem and therefore postponed the war and sent Richard Benson as the new Resident. Again Thayawady Min refused to have any official dealings with Benson. Thus neglected Benson recommended war as the only remedy. The Indian Government refused again to act on his advice. Benson for reasons of health left Ava in March 1839.

William McLeod (1839-1840)

Benson was succeeded by Captain William McLeod who worked as Resident for only four months. Thayawady Min was making warlike preparations and there was a rumour that even the life of the Resident was in danger.

McLeod decided to withdraw. At first the King gave no permission to the withdrawal, because he was afraid that it might amount to war. But later he allowed it and therefore the Residency was first transferred to Yangon. At Yangon, the Governor was good enough to accept the British Resident on friendly terms. But in November 1839, a new Governor was appointed in Yangon and McLeod found it difficult to work with this new officer. So in August 1840, the British Residency in Myanmar was officially abolished.

Up to 1862, no more attempt was made by the English to open diplomatic relations with the Myanmar Government. Thus, we had the second English-Myanmar War in 1852 without having any medium to settle the dispute peacefully.

Thayawady Min considered it his major concern to save Myanmar from becoming an English territory. He was well aware of this danger even when he was a young prince. When he became King, he was all the more anxious to preserve the independence of Myanmar. All his foreign policies centred on this consideration. But Thayawady Min was not a good diplomat. The methods he chose were all wrong. He did not want the presence of British Residency in his capital. At the same time he tried his best to ignore the terms of Yandabo Treaty. He refused to recognize that treaty on grounds that it was not made by him. But he did not want another war with the English. Thus he became very cautious in his dealings with the British Resident. He allowed the Resident and his fifty followers to remain at the capital. But he purposely ignored their presence by avoiding to give any audience to them. On the other hand, he enlarged the army and made warlike preparations on reasons of defence. Mr. Benson became Resident in 1838. The King quartered the Resident and his followers in a very unhealthy place and he charged the English for violating the terms of Yandabo Treaty. He also demanded the English to restore the provinces of Assam and the island of Belungyun at the mouth of River Thanlwin. He also claimed that a Myanmar nominee must be appointed as the Raja of Assam. He also pointed out that the English interference in the affairs of Manipur was unjust. He alleged that the English were collecting custom duties at Calcutta on a higher rate than in Myanmar ports. The English were not doing in accordance with the terms of the commercial treaty. It would be correct

only when both countries collected equal rates of customs. These were the Myanma counter charges on the English. Thayawady Min was successful in his final object. In 1840, the British Residency withdrew from Myanma. The whole country considered it a great achievement for being able to weed out the most undesirable plant that tried to take roots on their land. But in the long run, this proved to be a sad failure. Without the Residency, frontier disputes and commercial quarrels could not be settled peaceably any more. Eventually the Second English-Myanma War was fought twelve years later.

In foreign policy, Bagan Min was also anti-foreign like his ancestors, since August 1840, all diplomatic relations with the English were stopped and there was not a single attempt made to reopen it. English subjects living in Yangon recommended that the haughty nation like Myanma should be humiliated further so that the English interest in Myanma might prosper. They put up their complaints to the Indian Government and pressed to demand compensation for them from the Myanma Government. The Indian Government was also quite aware of the weaknesses of the Myanma Government. A small force if properly organised might easily conquer the whole country. Some of the complaints made by the English traders were found to be false though some were quite legitimate. On the Myanma side, people in general would hate a war after which they were called upon to pay an indemnity. Some of the Ministers were quite aware of the English superiority but they neglected to persuade a few influential people to go along a peace policy. On the other hand, Lord Dalhousie, a great imperialist, became the Governor-General of India. Former Governor-Generals regarded the complaints of the traders of Myanma as only personal grievances. Now Dalhousie saw

them in another light. He was of the opinion that rightly or wrongly, the English subjects must not be molested by any other Asiatic. He was prepared even to declare a war to defend the prestige of his nation and its subjects. There was also another group of Englishmen who let the English became more aggressive at that time. They were opening a settlement at Singapore and they made it their policy to control the whole coast line of the Indian Ocean extending from Karachi to Singapore. To take the Ayeyawady Delta was part of their scheme. The port of Yangon had great possibilities of becoming one of the most important trading centres of the East and therefore they wanted to take it and develop it.

But the immediate cause of the war started from a mere trifle. At Yangon two English Captains called Sheppard and Lewis were found guilty of murder. So the Myanma Court fined them the sum of Rs. 1705. The Captains appealed to the Governor-General that they were framed to get easy money. The Governor-General decided to interfere and an enquiry was held. The enquiry commission reported in the favour of the captains and so the Indian Government claimed Rs. 9,200, as damages on behalf of the captains from the Myanma Government and without awaiting the reply from the Myanma Government, the Governor-General sent Commodore Lambert with a fleet to Yangon to press the speedy payment of damages. Lambert brought two letters from the Governor-General, one for the King and another for the Myowun (Governor) of Yangon. He arrived at Yangon on 25 November 1851. Two days after arrival, Lambert sent his junior officers to visit Myowun Maung Oak. These officers came back and reported that they were not well received. At the same time, Captain Lambert demanded that the question in dispute must be settled as quickly as possible. Unfortunately the Yangon

Myowun had no such authority to settle a dispute of such importance. He must refer it to the central authorities. So he pleaded for grant of a few days which the English Officers were impatient to wait. Without knowing the Myanma official system, he considered the delay as an insult to his government and to him individually.

In self defence the Yangon Myowun made some warlike preparations. One of the King's ships was made ready for any emergency. This alarmed the European traders living in Yangon. They reported the English officers that the Myanma were preparing for an attack. In the meantime, the King got the letter sent by Lambert and quickly sent orders to satisfy the demands. Myowun Maung Oak was recalled and Maung Hmon was sent in his place in January 1852. The arrogant attitude of the English Officers made the new Myowun cautious. With growing impatience and anger Lambert blockaded the port of Yangon, and captured the Myanma warships. Myowun Maung Hmon offered terms of peace but Lambert demanded a meek apology from the Myowun. This was of course refused and on 10 January 1852, Myanma opened fire on the English ships and Lambert replied by shelling the port of Yangon. Because of the arrogance of Lambert an incident occurred at Yangon port which ultimately led to a war between Myanma and the English for the second time. On 12 January 1852 Lambert sailed back to Calcutta for further instructions and on 28 January 1852 he returned and very high-handedly demanded compensation and apology. Hostilities resumed on 31 January 1852. But on 1 February 1852 another negotiation was made and the English demanded compensation that amounted to 10 lakhs of rupees and this sum must be paid before 1 April 1852. That was a sort of ultimatum failing which an official war might follow. Yangon Myowun had to

report this to the King at Amarapura and it was impossible to have the reply before 1 April. The English declared war on Myanma. The second war was quite different from the first war. In the first war Myanma were quite willing to fight but in this second war they were not so willing. The English took the initiative.

There were about 10,000 soldiers in Yangon stationed on the mount of Shwedagon. They had altogether 24 cannons. Eight cannons each were posted on the southern, western and eastern sides of the Pagoda leaving the north undefended. At Myowun's residence there were 14 guns. A strong stockade was erected on the southern side of the Pagoda. On medieval standards this stockade was excellent. But it could not withstand the attack of new arms in the possession of English. On the other hand, the English came well prepared for the war. They took care not to repeat their mistakes of the first war. They were in possession of Rakhine and Taninthayi and therefore, it was much easier for them to send reinforcements and food supplies right up to the front. General Godwin was the Commandeer-in Chief of the English troops. Fifteen warship were also sent under Admiral Austen. The land expedition started from Mawlamyine and on 5 April 1852, Madama was taken. On 10 January 1852 English troops landed near Yangon and they attacked it from the southern side. Batteries on the southern side were silenced on that very day. On 11 January 1852 batteries on the harbour were silenced. On 12 January 1852 more English troops landed the coast of Yangon. Immediately the stock-ades were set on fire and the English troops advanced from the east. From the heavy fire of 24 pounder guns the main stockade was destroyed. Meanwhile the English troops advanced towards the Shwedagon Pagoda from Theinboyi, Kandawgyi and Kandawgalay. Myanma were completely

surrounded and on 14 March 1852 Shwedagon Pagoda was taken and that virtually meant that the city of Yangon fell into the hands of the enemy. Yangon was taken without loss of men on the English side in the first war, but this time 16 were killed and 133 wounded. After this battle of Yangon there was no real attempt on the Myanma side to stop the invaders. On 20 December 1852, Lower Myanma called by the English as the Province of Bago was annexed. Then terms were offered to the Myanma King to conclude a treaty. When refused the English declared that Lower Myanma was annexed to the British Indian Empire. Dalhousie himself visited Yangon and renamed Lower Myanma as the Province of Bago and a Commissioner responsible only to the Governor-General was appointed to rule this new province of the British Indian Empire. Sir Arthur Purves Phayre was appointed the Commissioner. A line of demarcation was drawn through the town of Alan. The territory immediately south of Alan became British. The inscription of one of the boundary pillars is as follows:

THIS PILLAR
MARKS THE NORTHERN BOUNDARY OF
THE BRITISH
PROVINCE OF PEGU LAID DOWN BY THE
OFFICERS OF THE DEPUTY QUARTER
MASTER GENERAL STAFF OF THE
FORCE IN PEGU, AND EXAMINED AND
CONFIRMED IN PERSON BY THE
MARQUIS OF DALHOUSIE
K.T. GOVERNOR GENERAL OF INDIA
ON THE 28TH DECEMBER 1853.
THE BOUNDARY LINE RUNS DUE EAST

FROM THIS POINT, CROSSING THE
 KEN - NYEE RIVER AT LADOO - QUAY
 OVER THE YOMAH RANGE OF HILLS
 AT TATTAY AND DOWN TO THE VILLAGE
 MAI - HAU ON THE SITTAUNG RIVER,
 FROM WHENCE IT PROCEEDS DUE EAST,
 TO THE SUMMIT OF THE PAUNLONG
 RANGE OF MOUNTAINS LATITUDE OF BOUND-
 ARY 19° 29' 3"

H.W. BILLING SCULP

Some political leaders in England criticised the aggressiveness of Dalhousie that Lower Myanma was annexed because the Myanma King refused to pay Rs.9000. The majority, however, supported Dalhousie. Dalhousie could have annexed the whole of Myanma but he considered it expedient to stop after taking only one half, because he had other pressing problems in India.

The taking of Lower Myanma was the most sure step to take the whole country sooner or later. The Myanma King also lost the important part of his country which yielded most of the national income. Myanma was closed off from her outlet to the world. It was now only a hinterland and, therefore, it could not have its former military or economic strength. The danger of becoming a subject nation became almost a certainty. So naturally the Third English Myanma War was a sequel to this Second War. This also caused a change of king in Myanma. Mindon Min rebelled and usurped the throne of Pagan Min on 17 February 1853.

Mindon Min's Foreign Policy

Most of the foreign relations made by Myanma during his reign were with the English. Mindon Min however tried to have contact with other European power too. The Second English-Myanma War had lost the Province of Bago and it was the King's hope to get back the lost land and restore the prestige of the Myanma King. He would not commit himself to have another war. At his capital there lived an Englishman called Thomas Spears and he acted as the reporter to the English government as he was in close touch with the King's Court. He was a private merchant but he was acting as a negotiator between the two governments as the British Resident had done before. For eight years Thomas Spears was a go-between of the Myanma and the English. He had a Myanma wife and he had a real interest for the good of the Myanma people. When Mindon Min was asked to sign a treaty recognising the province of Bago as English, he refused to do so. He considered it not his duty to sign away a territory lost by the former king. But he maintained peace throughout his reign. In 1853 he sent a mission to Phayre asking him to return the Province of Bago. He believed that if he maintained peace and friendship the English would voluntarily return his lost territory, at least when they had trouble elsewhere. The English fought the Crimean War in 1854 and there was the Indian Mutiny in 1857 and they were also engaged in Afghanistan and Crimean Wars. So the English was pretty busy during the first years of King Mindon's reign. But Mindon never tried to take this opportunity to reclaim his lost territory.

Instead Mindon Min contributed funds towards relief works after the Indian Mutiny and he patronised a Christian Missionary in Myanma under Dr. Marks. He sent his sons to the school established by Dr. Marks and allowed them to study the Bible. The English had repeatedly tried to

persuade the King to sign a peace treaty ceding the province of Bago to the English. So in 1854 the Phayre Mission arrived at Amarapura. Mindon Min received Sir Arthur Purves Phayre honourably and granted him audience publicly and privately. But he persistently refused to sign a treaty. Phayre offered to return the Mindon District but he refused to accept it. Soon after that the Indian Mutiny broke out in India as the first rebellion against the English suzerainty in India. He was informed by Armenian traders that the English power was collapsing in India. But Mindon Min remained friendly to the English as before. He issued strict orders to frontier officers to preserve peace. But actually there was no peace at the frontier. There were many dacoits and many pretenders challenging the English authority and claiming themselves as national heroes.

The English Government wanted to have a very prosperous commercial relation with Myanma. It sent agents to persuade the Myanma Government to contract a commercial treaty but all the attempts failed. Most of the profitable commodities in Myanma were under the King's monopoly. The King did not want to give up the Royal Monopoly on precious stones, crude oil and timber. At long last in 1862, a commercial treaty was concluded with the following terms:

- (1) Both parties agreed to reduce the duties at the frontier.
- (2) The British Resident was allowed to stay at Mandalay.
- (3) English subjects were free to trade in any part of Myanma

The treaty was ratified by the King himself but at the same time the King had no intention to give up his monopolies and therefore the terms of the treaty were never actually carried out. In truth the treaty was a failure. The

King was afraid that by giving these concessions to the English, his subjects might look upon him as a subordinate King. On 15 April 1866, the King issued a declaration to stop the Royal Monopoly for ten years except on crude oil, timber and precious stones. He also promised to reduce the duties to 5% only. Government of India sent Fytche to negotiate another commercial treaty. That was concluded in October 1887 with the following terms:-

- (1) Duties on all exports and imports shall be fixed at 5%
- (2) There shall be a free trade in gold and silver.
- (3) The British Resident shall reside at the capital, with full jurisprudence over all English subject.
- (4) English agents were allowed at the Custom House. In return the King was given permission to buy fire arms in the English territory with the approval of the Commissioner.

Fytche also tried to add another article to this treaty. It was to assure that the Myanma Government would not have any contact with any other foreign powers without the English consent. If this article was accepted, it would amount to subsidiary alliance recognising the paramountcy of the English power. Although the treaty was signed and sealed it was never put into practice, because the King never abandoned his monopoly and they were even increased. The English merchants however were allowed freedom of movement in the country giving opportunity to them to make surveys on Myanma economy, natural resources, people and politics. There was an increase in trade in the first two years. In 1871, another British Agent named Ashley Eden arrived at Mandalay and a new commercial treaty was concluded. In 1877, the Indian

Government suggested still another treaty. Negotiations went on but no agreement was reached. In the meanwhile, the French Government was trying to open up diplomatic relations with Myanma. Being afraid of the French influence, the English decided to annex the whole country. Thus we find the treaties were actually steps towards the annexation of the country.

The Re-establishment of The British Residency (1862)

The First Residency at the Court of Ava was withdrawn in 1840. If Myanma had accepted the Residency for long, its country might have been gradually turned into an English protectorate. But Thayawady Min succeeded in making the English withdrew from the capital and this enabled Myanmar to remain independent for a some more years. Now in 1862, Dr. Williams came to Mandalay as the British Resident because the Residency was reestablished. As before it would try to create an English protectorate of Myanma through treaties. If the English can control the country without annexation, it was ready to preserve the normal independence of Myanma. Soon after the Residency was reopened there was the Kayah affair. Karenni or Kayah Chiefs were under the Myanma suzerain. But now they wanted the English to take their land. Because of the Residency a compromise was reached and both parties agreed to make Kayah a buffer state.

In 1875, the 'shoe question' loomed large. The Governor General decided that the English Envoy must not take off their shoes and go on knees before the Myanma King, on the ground that the Myanma Envoys coming to India were not required doing so in Calcutta. The result was that Mindon Min never gave them an audience again. This

was a very unwise policy on the English part, because it was only a traditional practice here and the customs and usages of a country ought to be respected by the foreigners if they intended to have a friendly relation with whatever the country they were visiting. The English in those days were also very proud of their power. Thus a friendship was lost because of the shoes.

Missions to Foreign Countries Sent by Mindon

In 1856, a Myanma Mission went to Europe with Mr. Manook as interpreter. This Envoy visited Napoleon III of France with the ideas of getting French help against the English. But this mission was a failure. Napoleon accepted them very well but he promised nothing. In 1858, a trade mission from America arrived in Myanma. In 1872 another Myanma Mission visited Europe led by Kinwun Mingyi U Kaung. It visited the Royal Courts of England, France and Italy. U Kaung was well received by these Courts and he wrote a very good account of his travels. When he came back he recommended the King to send youths to Europe for study. In France, the Mission made a treaty by which the French were allowed to develop the Mogok Mines. But Mindon Min refused to ratify this treaty. As a result of the Myanma visit, an Italian Envoy came to Mandalay and a treaty of friendship was signed. In England, the British Government refused to have any diplomatic dealings with the Myanma Envoy. It was asked to deal with the Governor-General of India. Anyhow, the Envoy brought back letters from Queen Victoria, Prime Minister Gladstone and the Governor-General of India to Mindon Min. These foreign missions were a prelude to Thibaw Min's attempt to have an offensive as well as a defensive alliance with France against the English. During the course of these missions to Europe, the English were

jealously watching the Myanma advances and had decided to annex the country as quickly as possible.

Relation with France

After the French Revolution of 1798, Napoleon revived the imperialist policy but he was too busy in Europe that he had to abandon his design in the Far East. In 1848, Louis Napoleon came into power and he made himself Emperor Napoleon III in 1852. He revived the old French imperialism. In 1870, Napoleon was overthrown and the Third French Republic 1870-1940 was established. But the Republicans continued the imperialist policy and as a result French began to extend its influence in South Eastern Asia. In 1852 Cochin-China was occupied and in 1867 Cambodia was taken. The Myanma Diplomatic Mission under Kinwun Mingyi visited Paris. He was well received there and a commercial treaty between Myanma and France was concluded on 24 January 1873. But this commercial treaty was not ratified by Mindon Min. After Mindon Min, Thibaw Min tried to have an offensive and defensive alliance with France with the object of minimising the English influence in Myanma. By 1879, the British were busy with the Afghanistan and Zulu wars and therefore they were unable to give proper attention to the development in Myanma. Upper Myanma had as its neighbours, English on the west and south and France on the east. A Mission to Europe was sent on 30 April 1883 and a treaty with France was signed on 15 January 1885. The terms of this treaty were:

- (1) France was allowed to establish a bank at Mandalay and lend money to the King at 12½%.
- (2) France was given the right to develop the ruby mines and to obtain the monopoly of teak, as security for the money lent.

- (3) France was given a concession to build a railway from Mandalay to French Indo-China.
- (4) As security for the interest on the railway enterprise France was to control the river customs and earth oil dues.

Obviously these terms showed that Myanma had become a French Protectorate though no such designation was used. That invited an English interference.

The Incident of Teakextraction

The Bombay-Burma Trading Corporation was charged with illegal extraction of logs and fined 2,300,000 Kyats for a theft of 56,000 timbers on 12 August 1885. Some officers including the officer of Taung U, Yamethin were dismissed on 6 September 1885 for receiving bribes from the BBTC and on 10 September 1885, in default of giving the fine, BBTC elephants and various implements used in timber extraction and logs already collected were seized. For years the Military Department at Calcutta had had a plan for the invasion of Myanma (Hall 1948,177). The seizure of BBTC property was rather the occasion for sending an ultimatum (Cady 1965,116) on 22 October 1885. The ultimate cause was, as everybody knows, the French success in Myanma relations (White, 1913,102). The ultimatum from the English gave Myanma only three weeks for answer. The demands were:

- (1) Suitable reception for the Resident at Mandalay,
- (2) Suspension of proceedings against BBTC until his arrival in Mandalay,
- (3) Control of Myanma foreign relations by the Government of India, and

- (4) Facilities to develop trade between the English and Chinese through Myanmar.

The reply given was

- (1) BBTC case is closed;
- (2) English Agent may "come and go" as before
- (3) China trade would be assisted.

Thibaw Min declared war on the British on 7 November 1885. He was a prisoner on 28 November 1885.

On 1 January 1886 Myanmar was declared as part of the British Indian Empire. Thibaw Min was born on 1 January 1859 and died at Ratanagiri near Goa on the west coast of the Indian Peninsula on 15 December 1916, aged 57.

chapter ~ two

Conditions in the Konbaung Period

Government

Although Alaung-mintaya was militarily successful, he failed as a statesman and none of his successors were able to give the people good administration. Thus even in the time of triumph the seeds of decay were sown.

- (1) There was no constitutional law to limit the autocracy of the King. The King was the supreme ruler and his words were law. There were no means to check his arbitrary rule. There were also no popular institutions like parliament, etc. to uphold the people's right.
- (2) There was no middle class people to lead the people for improvements in social, economic and cultural conditions.
- (3) Social system in Myanmar was weak i.e. Myanmar do not have rigid family ties and among the royalty, the practice of polygamy weakened the character of royalties. So there were many disputes after the death of a king as to who should succeed him.
- (4) There was no organized form of government. The King and his favourites ruled the country. So there was much sycophancy. Officers were irresponsible. There was no salary system. Thus bribery and corruption prevailed.

- (5) Myanmar nationalism was led astray. In spite of striving for civil liberty, the national enthusiasm became antisocial. Therefore we can safely say that Myanmar had as yet no political consciousness.
- (6) There was a self-imposed isolation. Myanmar had neglected her foreign relations because of the popular belief that all foreigners were barbarous. While Europeans were developing on modern lines, we remained in the past. We failed to see the benefits of a foreign trade and we did not understand the importance of over-seas contact. We did not care much about foreign political institutions also.
- (7) Myanmar were too religious minded. The religious sentiment was also led astray. The ruling people were crude and ignored the good of the lower class. There was no regard for truth, mercy, righteousness, etc. in the ruling class. The people in general had more interest in religious festivities than in religious precepts.

These facts led to the fall of Alaungmintaya dynasty after about 150 years' rule in Myanmar.

Kingship

The divine right theory of Kingship is not applicable to the Myanmar King. Because in the divine right theory, it is accepted that a certain person had God's exclusive blessings to have a right to rule. But the Myanmar ideas on kingship system come from the Buddhist theory that the most fit person shall rule because of his intrinsic merit. Myanmar believed in reincarnation together with the concept that one's good in this life gives best opportunities in his next life and as such, the king must have a very meritorious past and this extended, the greater the king, the more

meritorious he becomes and therefore the nearer a future Buddha. Thus a King in Myanma ruled not for the blessings he received from the God but because he is virtuous in himself. Another thing that counts in Kingship is tradition and blood. When Alaung-mintaya became King, the chroniclers attempted to trace his descent from Anawmyatha of Bagan and Anawmyatha was traced to Mahathamada, the first on earth king.

Myanma Kingship has two distinct features. Firstly it has to ascertain the right to rule through conquest and secondly through descent. In these two features the first one is the most important and therefore we have frequent rebellions of royal cousins, massacre of kingmen and blood purges whenever the throne was in danger. There is not in the whole world a monarch as despotic as the Myanma Emperor. To incur his displeasure means death (San Germano, 1966, 73). There was no restraint of any form on the powers of a king. The only limitation to his powers was his voluntary respect for Buddhist rule and precepts to rule with kindness. Otherwise he was the Lord and master of the life and property of everyone of his subjects. No hereditary rank or title existed in the kingdom. Official position was the only sign of the rank and all officials were appointed or dismissed at the King's will. Dismissal from office usually means destruction and it was the step from the court to the goal. On the other hand, any one except a slave and an outcast might aspire to the highest office in the state.

Every subject is the Emperor's born slave; and when he calls anyone his slave he thinks thereby to do him honour. To express their sense of this subordination, anyone who approaches him is obliged to prostrate himself before him, holding his hands joined above his heads and lowering the head to avoid seeing him straight in the face. He considers

himself entitled to employ anyone of his subjects in any work of service without salary or pay and if he pays him anything after a service that satisfies him, it is done not from a sense of justice but as an act of bounty. Any woman that he fancies would be taken as a concubine (Ummadanti - Jataka No.527) of course, then were exceptions when married women were left unmolested, the Abhiseka (Royal Coronation) is taken as another possible check on despotism. It called for rigid acceptance of responsibility as a king of law under some fearful oaths and the King who had undergone the Mudabhiseka has the right to expect complete loyalty and subordination from all his people. Although it was mentioned that there was no hereditary rank among the officers, some hereditary rights were observed in village administration. Hereditary principle applied in:-

- (1) The succession to village headship.
- (2) The devolution of the eldest competent son for hereditary Yo, Sawke and Hmu and for these hereditary officers competency is important and these offices cannot be shared among two persons. Women were also admitted to the right of hereditary succession and there were sometimes female head of village tracts. Shan Saophas were also included in the hereditary ranks. The following posts were also hereditary:-

- | | |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| (1) Htaung Kè | (Prison officer). |
| (2) Gado Kè | (Ferry Licencee) |
| (3) Win Hmu | (Keeper of the Palace Yard) |
| (4) O Za Gyi or
Thway Thauk | (Sergeant of the Armed Men) |

(5) Myin Gaung or
Pe Nin

(Leader of horsemen or
boatmen)

Since Athi, Twin Zar or Twin Yo (The Rich Commoner Oil-well Owner) were also admitted to the hereditary rights, these groups are given privileges as exemption from taxes and land as Nay Myay (for building houses) and Sa Myay (for Cultivation). Thway Thauk (Blood Brothers) were formed like the various orders of English Chivalry. There were also Su Hmu (Leader of Craftsmen) and Thin Hmu (Leader of Guards like Twin Thin) whose position was kept in a family and when there were no successors to vacancies, group members could choose one of their best as the new leader.

Coronation Or Abhiseka

This is the process of transforming a de facto ruler into a de jura ruler. De facto means actual ruler and de jura means the ruler by right. And this tradition of Abhiseka is believed to have its origin from Mahathamada. During the early stages of the creation of earth, the world was as peaceful as a garden. Men did not have to worry about their existence. There was free food in abundance. But later, mankind became mischievous and there arose many quarrels among the people. So a group of wise people searched for a man of penetrating intelligence to distinguish carefully the truth from lies and a worthy person named Manu was elected Mahathamada. He was elected by people saying "Be you our Lord and govern us and do thou criticise and put to shame to those who so deserve and do thou esteem and raise those who deserve in a righteous manner according to the laws. For the responsibility of ruling thus you will be given one tenth of the wealth that each people earned". Then Manu underwent three modes of Abhiseka and was raised

to throne. This first King on earth was called Mahathamada (the great elected King) or Khatiya (the owner of the fields) or Raja (the Just and the wise). The Myanma empire under Myaydu Min or Badon Min was slightly less than the present day area of 237 thousand square miles with a maximum length of 12,000 miles and maximum breath of 500 miles. Chin and Kachin hills were never claimed as part of Myanma.

The administration does not change much from the one laid down by King Thalun (1629-1648). For the palace administration the King has Atwin Wuns (Ministers of the Interior). An Atwin Wun had to decide cases effecting the Royal Servants of the Interior except in cases affecting the personal safety of the King leading to effect an assassination and usurpation of the throne. There was a Myo Wun who decides all cases within and without the Naypyidaw (the Royal Residential City). A Win Hmu (the Guard of the Palace Yard) and Win Sachi (Clerk) deciding only on cases arising out of four quarters of the Palace Yard and Myin Wun (Minister of Horses) deciding all cases of the cavalry men and Sin Wun (Minister of Elephant) the case of elephant men. Superintendent and clerks of the service lands decide all cases of the Athi (Common People). Athi is not service man though in an emergency they are levied to give money or men or both. Land around their village was divided among them and the right to work each plot of land inherited, mortgaged or sold. In Aya Daw (King's Own Land), Lamaing (King's Cultivators) took a certain percent of the yearly produce for their own consumption. All Royal Orders were issued by the Hluttaw (Administrative Centre) in the King's name and written on Sar Choon (Palm leaf with both ends pointed). There were officers for special duty like Kyi Wun (Keeper of Granaries), Anauk Wun (Superintendent of West Palace), Lamaing Wun (Superintendent of the Royal Lands), Mahadan Wun (Ecclesiastical

Censor) in charge of Wuttakan (Religious Land), Shwe Daik Wun (Keeper of the Treasury) Ngwe Gun Wun (Superintendent of Silver Tax), Se Wun (Superintendent of Irrigations), Myo Lat Wun (Superintendent of Towns not attached to any district) and Yon Lat Wun (Superintendent of Villages not attached to any township) and Thayna Pati (Commander-in-Chief). Ameindaw (Royal Order) and Pyan Dan (Appointment Orders) were issued by the Hluttaw in the name of King. In Myanma administration there are two points to note, viz.

- (1) that the Hluttaw had an over-all charge and
- (2) that for nearly two and a half centuries, from Thalun Min to Thibaw Min, the administrative system had hardly changed (Than Tun, 1968, 187).

The reason for this static condition was that there were not much social and economic changes in Myanma for centuries except for wars when cultivable lands relapsed into jungle and irrigation dams broke. Big changes came in Lower Myanma and that also effected the upper country when people moved in there thousands south, when the English there encouraged rice growing for export in about 1869.

The Orders of King called Ameindaw were always legal in the way arbitrariness is legal in time of martial law. The Hluttaw served as the chief instrument of the King's power.

List Of Hluttaw Officers And Men

1. 4. Wungyis or Ministers (Those who have the biggest responsibility)
2. 1. Myinsu Wun (Minister of the Horse)
3. 1. Ahi Wun (Minister of the Corvee)
4. 1 Myetaing Amut (Superintendent of Land Records)
5. 4 Wun Dauk (Assistant Minister)
6. 4 Nakhan Daw (King's Messenger or Heralds)
7. 4 Sayedaw Gyi (Great Clerk of the Council)
8. 2 Myinsaye Gyi (Clerk to the Master of the Horse)
9. 4 Amein Daw Ye (Bench Clerk)
10. 4 Ahma Daw Ye (Drafter and dispatch writer)
11. 4 Athon Saye (Superintendent of Government Works)
12. 4 Aweyauk (Despatch writer for the Provinces)
13. 4. Myama Than Khan (Officers of the Burmese Envoys)
14. 2. Shan Than Khan (Officers of the Shan Envoys)
15. 2 Yun Than Khan (Officers of the Yun or Laos Envoys)
16. 2 Cassay Sarpyan (Writer of Manipuri)

	despatches)
17. 1 Tayok Sarpyan	(Writer of Chinese despatches)
18. 4 Athi Saye	(Clerk of the Corvee Department)
19. 4 Ameindawya	(Pleader)
20. 1 Thissadawya	(Registrar of Oaths)
21. 1 Neyacha Thwe Thauk Gyi	(Usher of the Council)
22. 1 Hluttaw Saunt	(Durwan)
23. 1 Letnet Taik Wun	(Superintendent of the Arsenal)
24. 1 Letnet Taik Soe	(Assistant to above)
25. 1 Kathaungmyaung Taik Soe	(Officer of the Hluttaw expense chest)
26. 1 Kathaungmyaung Taik Sarye	(Clerk of the above)
27. 1 Letsaungyu Taik Soe	(Officer in charge of the gifts received)
28. 1 Letsaungyu Taik Saye	1(Clerk to the above)
Total	65

Wungyis, Myinsugyiwun, Athi Wun and Wun- dauk were of superior grade and letters of patent with preamble setting out their duties is granted to them. The Myanma government had nine Departments but a new department to deal with foreign relations was added during the time of Sagaing Min so that there were totally ten departments, viz.

- (1) The Department of Appointments, which deals with appointment of officers, their dismissals, creation of new posts, giving promotions and swearing in of new incumbents
- (2) The Department of Justice to administer law
- (3) The Department of Education and Religious Affairs, which collects and preserves the inscriptions and old records, compiles chronicles, controls religious lands, and conducts state examinations charities, etc.
- (4) The Department of War that looks after the land forces and war boats.
- (5) The Supreme Court which deals with both criminal and civil cases and determines the hereditary claims and disputes.
- (6) The Department of Revenue i.e. custom duty on import and export.
- (7) The Department of Agricultural Revenue i.e. land tax and garden tax.
- (8) The Department of Works, which looks after the construction and upkeep of the roads, so that roads are serviceable all the year round.
- (9) The Department of Messengers is very similar to postal department of today; this department has quick messengers, horses and boats.
- (10) The Department of Foreign Affairs, created in 1827 after Myanma were defeated by the English and it is strange to note that it is put under four Wungyis. All Wungyis are collectively and severally respon-

sible for all the executive work. Next to Wungyi there are Wundauks and each Wundauk is helped by an experienced general clerk with two or three assistant clerks and some four or five trainee clerks. A Sayetawgyi is expected to produce complete statement on any file required. He must also furnish a progress report of the Department from time to time.

(1) The Department of Appointments

It was the King who personally directed the appointment of viceroys, the grading of princes and the granting of leaves. The Hluttaw had a right to interfere in the choice of the Heir Apparent and in Case when the King died without appointing a successor, the Hluttaw had the final authority to appoint a new King. By convention the King seldom refuses to appoint an officer recommended by the Hluttaw.

(2) The Department of Justice

The Hluttaw was the court of final appeal. It is necessary to know some terms of the Hluttaw. Sekagyet (Comment) is the report from subordinate officers. Hmatthagyet is the temporary rulings of the Hluttaw. Hmatsa is the digest of reports and rulings. The combi (Law) but no Upade is final until the King ratifies it by a royal order. There are no records of the legislation of the early Konbaung Kings but many of the rulings etc. during the times of Mindon Min and Thibaw Min are collected and published by the Government Book Depot.

(3) The Department of Religious Affairs

This acts as a general supervisory body on the discipline of the phongyies and monasteries. The Thathanabaing (Supreme Leader of Monks) is appointed by the King and a Mahatlan Wun and Kyaung Saye helped him. This department also looks after the construction of religious buildings and pagodas. It also encourages various branches of learning and conducts yearly the Pathamabyan (Recitation of Prescribed Religions Texts before the Examiners). It also collects and preserves inscriptions and old records.

(4) The Department of War

One of the Hluttaw Wungyi is made a Thenapati (Commander-in-Chief). Very often many Wungyis are both civil and military officers and in many important campaigns one or two Wungyis take the command, e.g. Hluttaw Wungyi Maha Thihathura and Maha Sithu served as generals during the reigns of Myaydu Min and Badon Min. Maha Bandula Commander-in-Chief of Sagaing Min's forces was also a Hluttaw Wungyi. An officer in the King's service in Myanma had had the ambition to be useful in both Hnalon (civil) and Letyon (military) affairs.

(5) The Supreme Court

Here again the Hluttaw is the highest court in the country. A Wungyi alone is competent to pronounce judgement in all cases criminal and civil. The petitions were read before the Wundauks who made their remarks with reference to some marked points of enquiry and passed the file to the Saye Daw Gyi. These officers passed them on to the Sayes who wrote out the complaints and defence and returned the papers, through the Saye Daw Gyi's to the Wundauks. The whole proceedings were then submitted to the Wungyis who passed the judgement.

(6) The Department of Revenue

Two officers viz. (1) Shwe Tike Wun (Officer-in-Charge of Treasury) (2) Kyi Wun (Officer-in-Charge of Granaries) with assistants for each district and Senior Officers at Taung U and Madama in charge of the receipt of revenues in cash or kind. Thathameda tax (Tithe) is introduced by Mindon Min but before that there was a system of taxation which seemed to have taken more from the people though less is sent to the Treasury. There are about seven kinds of revenues, viz. -

Kin Khun (Tolls) is collected at stations on the boundaries of the provinces. Kin Wun (Minister of Toll Station) is in charge and at each station there is an exmonk called Rajamattika (Born of Royal Mother) who probably checked extortion. There are thirty toll stations in Myanma proper and seventeen in the Shan State. Dues range from Rs. 1.25 to Rs. 3.10 for ten yokes of oxen and 5 pyas for one manload. At toll stations on river, e.g. at Sampenago, Kyauk Talone, Mingun, Mu Totthalot, the due was Rs. 1.25 on each boat going up stream and down stream and 25 pyas on each passenger.

Thittaw Khun (Forest Dues) is collected on timber, bamboo, roofing materials, ivory, beeswax and other forest products. On every Rs. 100 worth of products, Rs 12.50 is collected in the forests of the metropolitan areas. In other parts of the country, it is Rs. 15. The district officer is also the forest officer. There is no systematic conservation of forest because there was no great foreign demand yet and there were large virgin forests. The forest dues realised in Thibaw Min's time was Rs. 620,000.

Twin Htwet Khun (Revenue from mines) All mines belong to the King and they were given out in various forms of tenancy and leasehold rights. Oil wells are leased to families who kept hereditary rights. From the mines of jade, ruby, silver, gold, amber, lead, copper and sulphur, the King generally took the best stone and apart from a flat licensing fee, he also took a certain percentage on the sale of some metal or stone. ***Ze Khun*** (Revenue from bazaars) A farming system is used to collect this due. A stall selling silk has to pay ten pyas, a cart load of grains ten pyas and food stall or ngapi seller three pyas. In Thibaw Min's time, bazaar revenue amounted to Rs. 150,000.

Ku To Khun (Ferry Tolls) There are metropolitan ferries and provincial ferries. In Thibaw Min's time this revenue was about Rs. 8,000.

Htwet Kon Khun (Export Dues) Nominally it is 5% add valorem. But there are some restrictions on the export of rice, cattle, horses, elephants, timber (plank), gold and silver. European merchants spend the proceeds from their goods on ship- building. First class teak in Myanma costs £ 12 a ton while it is £ 17 in Calcutta and £ 20 in Bombay.

Win Kon Khun (Import Dues) There are inland customs and maritime customs. Articles brought by inland routes from China as silk, copper wares, brass wares, slate pencils, carpets, furs, satin piece goods, fluids, wax, hats, combs and paper. There are also edibles imported like dried pork, ducks' eggs, walnuts and apples. Inland customs are under the charge of Made De Wun (Dewaun, Collector of Revenue). The maritime custom houses are at Tanyin (later at Yangon) Sittway, Madama and Pathein. After the port authorities are satisfied with the bonafides of the

ship, it is piloted into the harbour and all the guns and the rudder are taken and stored. The Chief Customs Officer is usually a European, probably because Myanma are not a seafaring race and find it more convenient to transact affairs at sea ports through a foreigner.

Apart from revenues, the royal treasury has another source of income in the form of tributes from lesser lords and gifts and presents from various people. There is a special department to receive these tributes and presents. Gifts are offered at the Coronation and on New Year day. Saophas send annual or biennial or triennial tributes. Intervals between presentation of presents depend upon the distance of the area. The presentation times are at the New Year and the beginning and end of the Buddhist Lent.

Tax returns in 1883 was as follows:

Gross Receipts	Rs.	3,800,594
Expenses of Officials	Rs.	201,948
Expenses of King	Rs.	329,000
Net Receipts	Rs.	3,269,646

(7) The Department of Agricultural Revenue

In theory the King was the owner of all lands but in practice, land was either Aya Daw (Royal Land) or Bo Ba Paing (Private Property) or Myay Lat (Waste Land). Anyone can settle in a waste land. Because Myanma was scantily populated in those days and therefore land was plenty. According to 1891 census, 54 percent of the population were cultivators.

Aya Daw (Royal Land) Lands are classified royal by Ameindaw or order declaring any waste land to be reserved for the King. Another method is by forfeiture of private lands for offences against the law or by simple confiscation of private lands at the King's will. Another reasons of a land becoming Aya Daw is by escheat (i.e. if there is no successor to a dead man's estate the King can take that estate). So by these four methods, the King's Own Land cause into existence.

Wutta Kan (Religious Land) Wuttakan land is a land assigned to a pagoda or monastery by gift whether of the King or of a private individual. Lists of Wuttakan land in the whole country are inscribed on marble slabs in the compound of Maha Muni in Mandalay.

Bo Ba Paing or Dama U Gya (Private Land) Any one may own any portion of a waste land that he could use for cultivation and this type of land is known as Dama U Gya (land on which someone's chopper first falls). The right to use this kind of land is hereditary. It is also called Bo Ba Paing, because it has been handed down from ancestors. Another private land is formed by the gift of the king out of the royal lands, and another form is by sale or transfer. When a land is sold or mortgaged that land is classified as Danekitta. There are also Amudan land i.e. soldiers holding lands on a service tenure, (If they are not in service they have no right to cultivate that land). On royal lands there is no land tax. Only rent is collected and usually it is one fourth of the produce. Revenue from royal lands is collected by Ledaw Ok appointed by the Hluttaw. He takes order from Khayaing Wun or Myowun. Irrigation tax is collected by Lesaye or Le Ok. Le

Ok, Thugyi and Ywalugyi made assessment rolls, showing the lands cultivated, how much proved profitable, and what the probable outturn will be and these statements are checked by the Wuns. The statements is then forwarded by the Khayaing Wun to Le Yon at the capital. The revenue is received either in cash or kind.

For an unspecified year in Thibaw's reign and excluding 68,305 houses of the suburbs of the capital, the Shan State and the houses of the poor, disabled, learned and privileged, there were 405,925 houses paying the Thathameda of Rs. 4,059,205. Deducting expenses, etc. the government's net income was Rs. 3,860,210.

The Thathameda Collection in An Unspecified Year in
Thibaw Min's Reign

Houses in the suburbs of the capital, in the Shan State (including Myaylat), and houses belonging to the poor, disabled, scholars and privileged, were exempted	68305	
Houses paying at the rate of Rs. 10 per houses	405925	4059250
Expenses of the Collection at 10% of the Collection	405925	
Remission for Religious Purposes	29764	
Revenue from various taxes under 76 heads		4679802
Revenue from Royal Lands (from 831,319 bkt. paddy)		665015
Expenses Military and Civil	5108168	
Balance	<u>3860210</u>	
	9404067	9404067

The lost of Rakhine, Taninthayi and Province of Bago was the lost of Rs. 3500,000 or after deducting expenses, etc. the real lost was estimated at Rs. 1,700,000. The Shan State sent tributes to the value of Rs. 15,000 but return gifts also amounted almost the same with receipt and so there was actually no profit. They were also in rebellion and so Thibaw Min could expect nothing from them.

(8) The Department of Works

All public works come under three heads:

- (1) Set Hnit Yarthi Alope (Year round)
- (2) Asauk Alope (Constructions)
- (3) Set Alope (Manufactures)

Set Hnit Yarthi Alope is divided under four categories:

- (1) Ne Sin Alope (Construction of temporary building).
- (2) La Sin Alope (Works connected with sacrifices and charities).
- (3) Ta Hnit Ta Kher Alope (Works connected with great annual occasions like Lent, New Year, etc. where the buildings were better)
- (4) Athu Alope (Special Works) Asauk Alope has two divisions:
 - (1) Yazahrtarni Alope (Concerned with the great buildings of the metropolitan area, e.g. monasteries, palaces, bridges, etc.)
 - (2) Awe Alope (Concerned with the construction of the defence of provincial towns such as walls, moats and ports; irrigation canals, ponds, court houses, jails and service quarters)

Set Aloke has three separate works:

- (1) Arsenal and Ordinance work
- (2) Ship engineering department (only in times of Mindon Min and Thibaw Min)
- (3) Textile manufacturing (only in times of Mindon Min and Thibaw Min).

(9) The Department of Messengers or Postal Carriers (Sape Sayu)

The post is sent by fast messengers called Chay Lyin Daw or Royal Fleet of Foot, and a relay system is used. But it is used only when there occurred very important and urgent matters. Sometimes the post is sent by horses, elephants and sometimes by fast boats. But this postal system is organized only for official use and there is a very elaborate system of grading in the formal terms of address of the letters and summons.

(10) The Department of Foreign Affairs

Like the Tsung Li Yamen of China, this department is a new addition.

The Hluttaw and Byetaik

The Hluttaw is the most important organ which can exercise even a check on the King's power but the ministers of the Hluttaw very seldom do it. Because they could not expect the support of the people as they were only the nominees of the monarch and have arisen to high office by virtue of successful association with the King. Their duty is

not to look after the welfare of people but to please the King. It is incidental that they look after the good of the people because these people are the King's subjects. Their position is the King's creation and they serve only during the King's pleasure and dismissal from office is another word for disgrace or death so that the ministers are too careful to avoid the King's anger. As a medium between the Hluttaw and the King there is the Byetaik under Atwin Wuns or Ministers of Interior, who are in direct charge of palace affairs and they act as the middle men to take business from the Hluttaw to the King. There were four Atwin Wuns or Ministers of Interior and under them there are four Than Daw Sints or Record Takers and Readers and four Akun Wuns or Revenue Officers. Again these officers are assisted by four Akuk Sayes or Revenue Clerks and eight Byetaik Than Sints or Clerks of Atwin Wuns. An Atwin Wun has a right to hold up cases from the Hluttaw if he considers that further investigation is necessary. Byetaik is a separate building which is usually constructed next to the King's apartment and therefore it has a close relation with the King's person and Atwin Wuns are actually the King's private secretaries. These Atwin Wuns have to sleep two in turn in the palace and they have to attend the office at 7 am. But on every Second day they are relieved at 3 pm. At 9 am. Ministers of Hluttaw came with them to the King's morning Levee or Nyilagan. In the afternoon there is an informal audience called Bo Shu Gan when military officers are admitted with Atwin Wuns to see the King. At 8pm. there is the Evening Levee when Hluttaw members come again. Matters of importance are settled during this Evening Levee. The Civil Court of Appeal or Taya Yon is situated outside the inner palace enclosure near the East Gate. In this Court there are two to four judges and they are assisted by two to four Na Khans, four Taya Sayes and four to eight Amein Daw Yas (officially

recognised pleaders of the High Court). All cases of value Rs.500/- come right up to it, and cases over Rs. 5000/- come up direct to the Hluttaw. The Myanma way of deciding a law suit is firstly to advise the parties at law and then to decide in accordance with *Manu Kye Damathat*. It was only when *Manu Kye* is not definite that other codes are consulted. There are two other courts: They are Shay Yon (Eastern Court) or the Criminal Court, at the capital and Anauk Yon (Western Court). The Criminal Court at capital deals with theft, arson, prostitution, false weights and measures, offences against law on alcohol, slaughter of animals, rape, dacoity, sedition, etc. It also supervises the policing of the capital, the stocks and pillories. The Shay Yon is presided by two Myo Wuns (Governors of the Royal City) and they have four Htaung Hmus (Governor of the jail), four Myo Sayes (Bailiffs), one Shwepyiso (Alderman) and four Htaung Sachis (Goaler) to assist them.

The Anauk Yon or Women's Court supervises the affairs of the women of the palace and the wives of the officers. According to the Myanma customs and practices there are six kinds of judgements:

- (1) that the parties may reach a compromise among themselves;
- (2) that the parties may accept the decision of a private arbitrator;
- (3) that the parties may accept the decision of an official arbitrator;
- (4) that the parties may accept the decision of The Myowun or District Officer;
- (5) that the parties may accept the decision of the Chief Court of the capital i.e. Taya Yon; and

- (6) that the parties have to accept the decision of the Hluttaw and the King which is final.

The Pcedure of Law Court

The party grieved shall put a written plaint to the court and the judge may order his assistant who is called Nakhan to examine the plaint and give a summary report on it. After looking through the report the judge may fix the time of hearing. Then the parties can seek the help of advocates. When the case is heard the judge may ask either one of the two parties to bear the burden of proof. Then the Judge may pass the degree and if the parties are happy with the decision both of them eat pickled tea (Laphet) and the decision becomes final.

The Provincial Adminstration

The King appointed Viceroys, Generals, Governors, Township Officers and Village Headmen. Princes of the Royal Blood were sometimes given the control of the provinces. But these Princes were in the habit of rising against the King at the every favourable opportunity that late Konbaung Kings were careful not to appoint their half-brothers and cousins as Viceroys and Governors. As a security against rebellion Viceroys and Governors were kept at the capital and they visited their charges once or twice in a year. Their duties were carried out by their deputies. There was also a system of espionage and the King's spies in the Provinces reported the King on any misbehaviour of the officers. Anyhow, there was much corruption and a Governor ruled as if he were a King himself. The villages were under a headman sometimes called Thugyi (Chief of Commons) and Myin Gaung (Chief of Horse Men) or Thwe Thonk Gyi (Chief of Armed Man) or Pe Nin (Chief of Boat Men). All were of equal rank in the village administration. A vil-

lage under the Myanma King is a fairly compact and well defined unit with practically self-sufficient economy. The officer of the village i.e. Thugyi or Thwe Thauk Gyi was usually a hereditary officer. Thus he knew well the needs of the community. Thus the people in general were quite satisfied with the village administrative system. Although the Myanma regarded the government as one of the great dangers of life, the people were quite happy. The community life was easy. Cultivable Land was plentiful and fertile and the climate was favourable and there was not much hardship in producing food. These circumstances often allowed a Myanma to consider life as easy.

General Features of Adminstration

- (1) There was too much allowance for arbitration so that it often was led to misrule or corruption
- (2) Favouritism prevails and so most of the officers are inefficient.
- (3) But the people accepted the theory of kingship without any question and they are quitesatisfied or adapted to "the rule of one."
- (4) Thus we find no serious attempt made by the Myanma to change their political and social life.

The Population of Myanma under the Myanma Kings

Population figures are important for two purposes;

- (1) for taxation and
- (2) for raising levies.

The first official counting of households was made in 1638 by King Thalun. The second time was in 1783 by

King Badon (1782-1819). So there was a long interval between the two checkings but it is important to note that there is a very slight change to the statistics of these two checkings because Myanmar social life was almost static. The 1783 count gives the total number of population in Myanmar proper as 2,279,638. The total in the whole of the Myanmar Empire is 4,209,240. These figures are quite reliable. The British Resident in Myanmar, Mr. Burney said "I am inclined to place much reliance in the census of 1783". Another check is made in 1826 i.e. immediately after first Myanmar-English War. According to this 1826 check Myanmar has 2,330,958 people so that there is only an increase of a little over 50 thousand people after 43 years. The total population of the Myanmar Empire is 47,230,558. These are the official figures of the checking. Mr. Symes (who came during the time of Alaungmintaya) gave the estimate that Myanmar had 14 million people which is impossible. Another visitor Capt. Cox (Envoy to Ava) estimated that there were 8 million people, which is also impossible. In 1810 Capt. Canning observed that the population of Myanmar was between two million and four hundred thousand. It sounds real enough. In 1826 Crawford was sent to Ava and he estimated that the population was 2,414,000. Reverend Malcolm's estimate is two million people. Thus we can safely conclude that the population of Myanmar proper is a little over two million during the Konbaung dynasty. Births and deaths or losses seem to be quite equal because of many wars and Mon migrations into Thailand.

The Armed Forces of the Myanmar Kings

In theory, the King has the right to the service of all his subjects and thus all able-bodied males of the country must serve him as soldiers in times of emergency. In other word Myanmar could be regarded more or less as a nation of

soldiers. But there is also a standing army and according to 1879 estimate, there are 13,388 foot soldiers and 5,292 cavalry men. Customary recruiting areas are Shwebo, Madaya, Alon-Tabayin and Kanni. All Konbaung Kings fought with these people from these parts and so the strength of their armies also remained almost the same through out. The strength under Kings Mindon and Thibaw though one half of their domain was gone, remained almost the same as in the time of their ancestors.

The Cavalry: The cavalry is regarded as the most reliable force and Myanma have a high opinion of the Manipuri horsemanship. So the Kathè Regiment tops the list of the cavalry. There are altogether twelve regiments. They are:

- (1) Kathè
- (2) Akkapat (Cachar)
- (3) Ye Bet
- (4) Shwe Pyi Yan Aung
- (5) Myin Su Gyi Myanma Myin
- (6) Myin Su Gyi Shan Myin
- (7) Myin Su Gyi Zinme Myin
- (8) Nauk Taw Pa
- (9) Lamaing
- (10) Nan U Mingala
- (11) Mingala Ye Nyun and
- (12) Si Taw

The War Boat Organisation: According to the report by Symes, there are 500 war boats in operations order. Each boat has 50 to 60 men, so that the war-boat personnel is 2,500 or 30,000 strong. These people are stationed at villages along the Ayeyawady and are put under the control of Pe Ninṣ. They are given Ayadaw Lands to cultivate and are exempted from all taxes. Since the time of Alaung-mintaya the Portuguses and French men was employed as artillerymen and the gunners of the boats were mostly the descendants of these foreigner service men.

The System of Recruiting: Apart from these standing armies, in time of emergency the King through the Hluttaw issued orders to the Governors to send a force of fixed number on a fixed day. The number was fixed in proportion to the population of the province and the population is estimated in accordance with the number of registered houses. The method of raising levies varies with time and place. But a common method is that one house has to give two or more soldiers. On the average, it means one soldier for every fourteen people. In the actual conscription, the Thugyi has the final decision and a conscript was allowed to provide a substitute either by paying him a certain sum of money or by cancelling a debt, he owed.

Total Number of Fighting Men: According to the estimation of Harvey, Myanma could not have more than 60,000 soldiers in the field, even during the time of most warlike Kings Alaung-mintaya and Myaydu Min. Myanma chronicles also give a similar figure. Alaung-mintaya in his Thai campaigns went with 44,000 soldiers and sent back 4,000 soldiers and reached Ayutthaya with just 40,000. Myaydu Min in 1763 sent 3,000 horses and 20,000 men to Chiang Mai and in 1764, he sent another 3,000 horses and 20,000 men to attack Ayutthaya. He also sent 25,000 to conquer

Manipur. So the total strength he could put in field was 6,000 horses and 65,000 men. In 1766, Myaydu Min again sent 200 elephants, 2,000 horses and 20,000 men to Chieng Mai which had rebelled and then before that army returned the Chinese invaded Myanma. To stop the invaders Myaydu Min sent 200 elephants 2,000 horses and 20,000 men by land and 15,000 by river. So the total was 400 elephants 4,000 horses, 55,000 men. In the second Chinese invasion he could muster just about the same number. In the Third invasion he was able to raise the number to 62,000. When Badon Min invaded Thailand he raised the strength up to 13,000 horses and 134,000 men. But less than half of this amount was really useful. (That was why Badon Min failed). Alaung-mintaya organised his army from a few selected friends and he reigned for only seven years. So he could not have a big army but Myaydu Min was an experienced warrior King and so his 60,000 men was the true strength of Myanma army. Badon Min had no practical experience. He was too young when his father and brothers were leading victorious armies. But the success of the dynasty reached the zenith at his time. His army was swelled enormously by camp followers. From the mobilisation order of Maha Bandula in 1824 we can have a good picture of the organization of the Myanma forces:

5 men	1 Oza
10 men or 2 Ozas	1 Akyat
50 men or 5 Akyats	1 Thwethauk
100 men or 2 Thwethauks	1 Tat Hmu
500 men or 5 Tat Hmus	1 Nga Yar Bo

Above many Nga Yar Bos there was one Tat Paung Bo. Above many Tat Paung Bos there was one Bogyoke. Above many Bogyokes there was one Sit Ba Yin (Lord of the War). The position of a Sit Ba Yin was reserved for the King himself or a senior prince when he actually came out to lead the army. In the Thai and Chinese campaigns leaders like Naymyo Thihapate, Maha Nawayatha, Maha Sithu, Maha Thiha Thuya were referred to as Bogyokes. A Bogyoke has two Sitkes and one Nagan whose duty is similar to the Chief of MP to look after the moral of the soldiers and one Tat Yay (Sergeant Clerk). Higher military ranks are always given to Ministers, Governors and "Eaters" (Who holds a town or province as his tief).

The Military Equipment: One company has 100 men and 13 officers and as equipment this company must have 113 pairs of leather sandals, 113 calabash gourds for water bottles, 20 copper pots for cooking curry, 20 copper pots for cooking rice, 20 Ya Ba (a large lacquer tray out of which 5 men could eat), 20 Mo Gar (Waterproof covering like a tarpaulin or oil cloth), 160 large nails, 20 axes, 20 hammers, 20 Damas(Cutlass), 20 saws, 111 swords, 10 small gongs for Akyats, one medium sized gong for Thway Thauk Gyi, 1 gong painted three parts red and one part gold for Tat Hmu, one red umbrella for Thway Thauk Gyi, one horse for ditto, one red umbrella with gilt fringe for Tat Hmu, one horse for ditto, one silver handled sword for Thway Thauk Gyi and 10 spears and 40 guns. One soldier cannot have one musket. In 1795, it was estimated that there were only about 20,000 muskets in the Myanma army.

Artillery: Mostly Christian gunners were employed. Badon Min in the Thai campaign of 1786 had 20 guns of one to three inches bore.

Fighting Elephants: Originally elephants carry howdah (open seat or under canopy) from which spearmen and archers fought. One to three inches calibre guns were put on each elephant. Seven musketeers were stationed around each elephant. Elephants, horses, and foot soldiers were used in the ratio 1:10:100.

Commissariat Department: The Myanma army has no special unit for food supplies. Soldiers eat on anything and collect food from villages as they march through. During the long siege of Ayutthaya in 1767, some soldiers were assigned to cultivate the fields around the city.

Uniforms: Regulars have some sort of uniform. But conscripts do not seem to have had any issued to them. Probably they tie some pieces of red cloth round their heads.

Discipline: The soldiers marched along more or less in confusion. But loyalty and obedience was enforced through severe and effective methods. Men and officers leave behind their families as hostages and if they were found guilty of major faults their families as well were punished severely like themselves. An officer was held responsible for his charge and he had the power of life and death over his men.

The Military Strategy & Tactics: The favourite tactics used by Myanma was the stockading. Cavalry was placed on either flank of the main body to close in upon the enemy. If victory appeared doubtful, the army rapidly entrenched itself under cover of heavy fire from artillery and small arms.

When the smoke was cleared, the stockade was complete and the men inside were ready to defend it. Letwe Thondaya had served Maha Dham-maraja-Dhipati Alaung-mintaya, Dabayin Min, Myaydu Min and Singu Min in the army. He wrote *Thay Ninga Byuha Sit Thamaing* from which the followings are extracted.

The formations used in an army's march

1. Like the Sha Hlin Kan (a rug or carpet) where the van, main body and rear are of equal strength.
2. Like the Pyathat (many tiered roof of a Myanma palace) which is a triangle where the small van gradually spreading out into a strong rear.
3. Like the Pan Pon Taung (flower basket) where the rear being smaller than the van.
4. Like the Ma Yo Si (a drum) in which the middle is bigger than the van and rear which are of the same size.

The formations used in approaching the enemy

1. Like the moon, in which the king or general remains in the centre and in concentric circles the regiments are stationed around him
2. Like the sun, in which the king or general places himself at the head of the army and the army ranging itself behind him and follows him wherever he leads.

Six formations were used in attack

1. Like the Garuda (Galon) bird's wing in which the commanding general is in the centre, while the two wings spread themselves out on his left and right.
2. Like the waves in which the attack is delivered in successive waves.
3. Like the chief bull in which the attack is delivered in a concentrated rush at the point of initial contact.
4. Like the bow in which the centre is slightly behind the wings which were spread out.

5. Like the Makan fish in which there is a van, centre and rear and two flanks of equal strength.
6. Like the snake in which the offensive is made as supple as a snake, giving way here, advancing there and so on.

Six formations used in defense;

1. Like the bridge where the whole army is in a close-packed order in horizontal mass.
2. Like the claws of a scorpion where the two wings are extended like the claws of a scorpion from the main body.
3. Like the front of a cart where the levies are placed in the centre and the regulars are ranged around them.
4. Like the beehive where the regulars are surrounded by levies.
5. Like the crows feet where three separate columns radiate from and in front of the main body while the fourth column is ranged behind it.
6. Like the tripod where the army is divided into three equal parts and placed like the sides of an equilateral triangle.

For the bridge defense, the Waves attack must be used.

For the scorpion defense, the Waves attack must be used.

For the cart defense, the Galon attack must be used.

For the bee-hive defense, the Snake attack must be used.

For the crow's feet defense, the Makan attack must be used.

For the tripod defense, the Bull's attack must be used.

Courage of Myanma Soldiers

Individually a Myanma soldier is very brave. He is a very skillful builder of stockades and also an expert in backwood-fighting. But the fall of a leader is the end of everything to him. Wherever the leader goes he is ready to follow but he is helpless when the leader falls. Colonel Bowen in 1824 remarked; "They fought with a ferocity and obstinacy, I never witnessed in any other troops. They fought desperately, reserving their fire to the last moment and seldom missing their object". Myanma soldiers were defeated by the British for not want of courage but for want of modern weapons.

Culture

Under Alaung-mintaya a national literature came into formation. The first Damathat in Myanma was compiled by King Wararu (1287-1296) who was a Mon King. Some books like Damathatkyaw and Kosunggyok were compiled during the time of Bayinnaung (1551-81). In King Thalun's time (1629-48) Kaingsa Manu compiled the Manusara Shwe Myin and it was the first law book written in Myanma. By 1750 just before Alaung-mintaya, a Sayadaw of Sinbyugyun, Minbu District, wrote Compiled the Manu Ring Damathat in Pali. In 1755 Tejosara translated it into Myanma and under Alaung-mintaya's order Mahasiri Uttamajaya compiled the Manukye Damathat which remains up to this day the only authoritative book on Myanma Law. This book is in fact a compilation of Myanma existing customs and usages that have the force of law. Myanma Laws are found to be most humane and equitable. Alaungmintaya had many court poets like Yan Aung Bala and Letwe Thondara.

The most important poet during Tabayin's reign was Sein Da Kyaw Thu (1736-1771). He was a nephew of Twin Tin Taik Wun and a native of Maungdaung village in Monywa District. He had served under Taung U Yaza before. His chief works are Kawilakkana Thatpon and O wadthu Pyo

Myaydu Min sent to Banaras for Brahmans and nine Brahmans came to help the King in various affairs of the court. With their help Maung Daung Sayadaw translated into Myanma many Sanskrit works on grammar, medicine, astrology and history. In 1771, Manu Wunna Kyawthin compiled a *Damathat* with the help of Taungdwin Sayadaw. The King himself took an interest in literature. Letwe Thondra was exiled to Meza in Katha district and there he wrote the famous *Meza Taung Chay Yadu*. In the time of Singu Min 1779-1782, the Kings tutor of his youth Nga Hpyaw or Min Yè Zayya wrote a panegyric called *Paleik Sa Ayegyin* on the ancestors of Singu Min.

Twin Thin Tike Wun (1726-92) was the tutor of Bodan Min when he was a young prince. When Badon Min became King, his tutor became Kyiwun (Commissioner of Granaries). He revised the chronicle of Myanma. There were also many other courtiers who wrote beautiful prose and verse under royal patronage. Nga Aung Hpyo wrote a verse on Kyanzitha, on the China tooth and Thamine of Halin (Pyu centre). Nawadè Nge wrote court verse on the royal family and a mawgun of Meiktila Lake when the King repaired it in 1796. In 1785 U Awbatha of Minbu wrote a fine prose version of *Maha Janaka Jataka*. Letwe Thondara (1723-1799) was one of the secretaries of the Hluttaw under the Ava Kings. Alaung-mintaya reemployed him. His best known work was *Meza Yadu*. Letwe Nawrahta wrote on the Thai conquest of 1767, the coronation of Badon Min, the Rakhine conquest of 1785, on Mingun pagoda and a law book called *Winisayapakathani Damathat*.

Badon Min tried to solve two very important problems of his time. One was the controversy of Atin (covering the Monk's robe on one shoulder only) and Ayon (covering both shoulders) among the Buddhist Order of Monks. It began from about the second quarter of the 18th century and Alaung-mintaya decided in favour of Atin (One Shoulder) though Badon Min was for Ayon (Both Shoulders). He ordered that all monks should conform to Ayon. He thought he had put an end to the Schism but he failed. Later in his reign he revised his former order and allowed monks to join any group of their own choice. Next he tried to introduce a new calendar called the Pon Daw (King's Own) but he failed in that again and he acknowledges defeat and went back using the old calendar in spite of its mistakes that persist even today. The Sagaing Min was also interested in literature and learning. The Hman Nan Yazawin (Glass Palace Chronical) was compiled by scholars under royal orders. The Chronical started from the very early times down to 1820 i.e. from Maha-Thamada to the beginning of his rule. Prince Makkhaya was the uncle of the King and he was a great scholar patronising art and literature. He even studied western languages and western sciences. But for want of a political influence he was unable to introduce any reform in Myanma. Myawadi Mingyi U Sa was the most intelligent minister of the time. He perfectly understood the strength of the English and he had some ideas of reform. But he was also unsuccessful like Mekkhaya Prince. Among the English notables, there were Bayfield, the doctor of the Residency, Edwards the interpreter of the Residency, Burney the Resident and Judson the American Baptist Missionary. Judson compiled the Myanma-English Dictionary and translated the Bible into Myanma.

Literacy in Myanma under Myanma Kings was much higher than in any other European countries of those times, because the Buddhist monks of every village looked after the education of the children of the village. In every monastery, a school was attached under the supervision of the Head Monk to instruct the fundamental religious instructions. These monastic schools, though unable to teach modern science, were found to be quite satisfactory in giving an education of high order to people. Mindon Min was very much interested in education and he patronised the studies in Pali and Buddhist Philosophy. He sponsored every year a public competitive examination called Pathama Byan and this examination was held in three stages, viz. Pathama Nge, Pathama Lat and Pathama Gyi and the one who stood first in all the religious examinations of the year was called Pathama Gyaw. The subjects of the examination were Pali Grammar, Buddhist Philosophy, Rules of the Monk. Mindon Min also encouraged teaching Chemistry, Physics, Mathematics, etc. through the medium of English at a Christian Missionary School by Dr. Marks, an Anglican Minister at his capital Mandalay. Mindon Min gave subsidies to Dr. Marks for building a school as well as a Church. He also extended his patronage to Roman Catholic and French Missionaries. He was also very much interested in the development of Myanma literature. Among the poets of his time, U Ponnya of Salay was the most popular.

It will be of some interest to relate a short history of the Buddhist Synods that were convened after the death of Buddha. The First Buddhist Synod was held in 477 B.C, soon after the death of Buddha. It met at Rajagihā, the capital of Magadha. The president of this assembly was Kassapa and 500 Bhikkhus were assembled. It was supposed to be an international council and the teachings of the Lord Buddha

were recited in full by his disciples. But historically this council cannot be called an international council nor the Tipitaka was settled at this council, because at that time Buddhism was confined only to two provinces of Magatha and Kosala.

The Second Synod was held in 380 B.C. at Vesali in the province of Bihar. It was also a local council because Buddhism was not an all Indian religion as yet. It was summoned to level up the sects and in this council some parties demanded the relaxation of the discipline of the monks. The Tipitaka was not yet settled.

The Third Synod was in 250 B.C. and it was summoned by King Asoka at his capital Patliputta. The first attempt was made to reduce the tipitaka into written records. This third synod was an international one, because it was King Asoka who tried hard to spread Buddhism outside Middle India. Buddhist missionaries went outside India and visited both East and West Asia.

The Fourth Synod was in 100 B.C. and it was summoned by the King at Vattagamani Abhaya at Aloka Cave in the village of Matale in Srilanka.

The Fifth Synod by King Mindon was in 1871 and although it was supposed to be an international council only the representatives from Srilanka attended this council. So it was rather Myanma Buddhist Council. Anyway it was really a great achievement and King Mindon was highly popular among his subjects on account of this meritorious deed.

chapter ~ three

Myanma Under The British

Area and Populartion

Myanma under the British has about 262,000 square miles with the population of over 15 millions. Out of this population, 2/3 are Myanmar. Apart from Myanmar there are many other dialects, such as Chin, Kachin, Kayah, Kayin, Mon, Rakhine and Shan. The European population is only 0.06 percent of the whole population.i.e. 31,000. In 1824, the approximate population of Myanmar was only 4 million. In 1931 it became 15 million and in 1941, it increased to 17 million. Rakhine before the Myanmar took it had 0.5 million population but under the Myanmar rule it was reduced to 100,000. The reason was that many thousands were taken to central Myanmar and many more moved into India. In 1931, the Rakhine population increased to one million. The population of Taninthayi in 1931 is two million, i.e, 20 times of the population under the Myanmar.

When the British took over Lower Myanmar in 1852, it was very scantily populated. In 1931 it had 5 million people and it grew more food than the entire country can consume. The development of Lower Myanmar coincided with the opening of Suez Canal in 1869. Since then Yangon developed into a great modern port. In 1885, Upper Myanmar was taken and natural resources of the country were developed, as in

the oil fields of Yenangyaung and silver mines of Namtu. To develop agriculture in Myanma, Indians were at first encouraged to come over. But their migration was stopped later and the people from Upper Myanma were persuaded to move south and take up rice growing in the Delta.

Reasons of British Annexation of Myanma, Underlying Causes

The British were often alleged by the Myanma that they annexed Myanma because Myanma is rich in natural resources. But after careful examination, it was found that the English motive was not even economic. In 1824, Rakhine and Taninthayi were taken from Myanma. Because the English Company wanted to have a continuous coast line from Karachi to Singapore so that she might be the master of the Indian ocean. Singapore, is a strategic port of great importance and it increases in value when the coast lines leading towards it are all annexed.

In 1852 there was another chance to complete the work that was begun 1824 by taking the coast line of Lower Myanma. Thus there was an unbroken coast line down to Singapore. In this second annexation, Governor-General Dalhousie saw the possibility of developing Lower Myanma into a great food producing land. But it was only a dream at that time. Real development in Lower Myanma started from 1870. In 1885, Upper Myanma was annexed for fear of French encroachment. So this time it was political and therefore the British motive was neither to gain the control of oil wells at Yenangyaung nor the silver mines at Namtu. The English Chamber of Commerce thought that a trade route to China from Upper Myanma was possible and this would open a large market for the Manchester's cotton goods. But later this hope also proved to be useless.

The British Administration

It was the popular remark that the Englishmen gave Myanma not a government but an administration. They made administrative machine perfect. Political direction came from the Indian government with the British parliament in the dim background i.e. Legislature in England had every right to determine the policy in the colonies of India and Myanma, but in practise it allowed a free hand to the Governor-General in Council at India. The officialdom was also made into a curiously impersonal organisation i.e. officers were more tools of the administrative machine.

The officers retired at 55 and were liable to transfer. And it was often the case that when an officer began to know his charge then he was transferred. After the annexation of Upper Myanma, pacification took five years and after that nothing ever seem to happen until a new political structure was created in 1923 and since 1937 the country became too noisy for their foreign masters. From 1824 to 1937 i.e. for a little over half a century, Myanma was a province of the Indian Empire. From 1923 onwards the English began to teach by little, the self-governing principles to the Myanma people. In 1937, Myanma was separated from India and was given a separate existence. By the end of 1941, Myanma was administered by 3,200 Civil Officers (i.e. from Governor's Councilors and High Court judges down to police inspectors excluding clerical staff). Of these 715 or 22% were English. The rest 2,485 were Asiatics (Myanma in the majority). In Civil Service Class I, before 1923 it was exclusively English. In 1942 there were 145 class I officers out of which 81 were English. There were 82 Police Service Class I Officers of whom 63 were English. There were a total of 15,000 policemen. Before 1923, Class I officers were recruited in England. But after 1923, half was recruited in Myanma. In the remaining

services, Myanma held the majority. This increase of Myanma officers resulted in a rise of new social order and it ultimately led to a new social friction. To attract services in Myanma, Englishmen were paid enormously big salaries. But the end of their service, the salary came up to 42,000 a year. In 1938 an enquiry committee was appointed on this enormous pay system. The Committee said that "a Ford country cannot afford a Rolls Royce" administration and that native university graduates may take the place of English men".

The Courts of Justice

The judicial service from Chief Justice to Junior Stipendiary had 200 members (13 English and 187 Asiatics). The High Court had nine Judges of which six English, one Anglo-Myanma and two Myanma. There were 21 District and Session Judges of which seven were Englishmen, three Anglo-Myanma and eleven Myanma. 170 Assistant and Subordinate Judges or Magistrates were all Asiatics and nearly all Myanma. More than half of them drew less than Rs. 350 a month. (Average Myanma family lived on Rs.35 a month). The small pay of the subordinate service man makes rampant bribery and corruption.

In the judicial service there were 200 whole time Judges and some Honorary Magistrates and Executive Officers who have to try cases. Therefore, the total number was 650. The Law Code was British, a little modified to suit the people of India and that British-Indian Law was used in Myanma too, so that law is totally strange to Myanma. But in the civil law suits, the Myanma customary law is used. Sir John Jardins studied the Myanma customary law in 1880 and said that it is a just and reasonable law as anyone could desire. Thus Criminal Law Code appears to be totally strange to the people and in Civil Court although Myanma principles on law are

said to be regarded, the English Judges know very little of it and therefore the atmosphere of the court is very strange to all Myanma people. Bribery and corruption of the old time took a new form under the British. As the people find it very difficult to understand the laws of the British, an intermediate class is necessary to explain law to the people. They are the lawyers. In most of the cases the lawyers reap the utmost benefit from either the plaintiff or the defendant and especially in civil suits the lion's share goes to them. The lawyers manufactured litigation and half of the cases tried should never come to the court. The High Court and district and sessions judges are incorruptible but they were only 50 out of 650. the rest are usually corrupt. According to the report on corruption of 1941 the courts as well as most of the government departments were found to be corrupt and the reason for this was that the laws made by the British are good on paper but they are unintelligible to the simpler public and thus they became instrument for extortion. As regards crime, Myanma tops the list of all countries. In England and Wales there are 40 million people and there was an average of 140 murders a year. Myanma had 14 million with 900 murders a year. The reasons for this enormousness of crime are:

- (1) Lack of parental control,
- (2) Decay of religious discipline,
- (3) Monotony of village life,
- (4) Poverty, and
- (5) Vent to sudden anger.

These five facts are found to be the explanation of ever increasing number of crimes. But all the reasons are really true. Because Myanma under the British was not so poor. In some cases the economic condition had even improved and most of the crimes were committed in the Delta where the country is most prosperous. Stabbing is a new crime appeared only under the British. Crime increased under the British rule and it was even arguable that it was caused by the British rule, which ushered commercial economy in agricultural products, especially rice.

The Army Under the British

Under the Myanma Kings, a Myanma soldier individually was found to be very brave and intelligent. But under the British it became almost an accepted view that a Myanma will never be a soldier. In Myanma there were only two brigades (two British Battalions and four Indian Battalions) in the whole country and six Battalions of Military Armed Police in the frontier. Armed police were largely Indians and hill men. There were 4,000 reserved as Military Police Battalions of which $\frac{1}{4}$ were Kayins and $\frac{1}{4}$ Indians. Myanma do not care for an army life though history shows that they were once good soldiers. Failure to recruit them may be one of the causes of the increase in crime. Therefore, the British in the later period persuaded Myanma to join the army. A field company of Myanma Sappers and Minors was established during 1887 and 1927. Myanma are natural sappers from their skill in rough carpentry and their resourcefulness. They have proved their worth at Mesopotamia during 1916-1918. From 1916 to 1927 four Battalions of Myanma Rifles were established and they had served in Mesopotamia and Palestine. Myanma became a minority in these battalions and soon they became predominantly Kayin, Chin and Kachin. Except 700 in the Military Police Battalion, Myanma were

excluded from the Regular Units during 1927-1937. In 1937, Myanmar was separated from India and therefore, the Regiments were reconstituted so that they have the Myanmar majority. Still in every twelve officers there was only one Myanmar officer and in every five men there was only one Myanmar soldier.

Communications

Myanmar had no good overland routes with either India or China or Thailand. Until recently Myanmar is sparsely populated while her neighbours are thickly populated and so if there has been a railroad to India or China, Myanmar would have been swarmed by immigrants. The mountain barrier is often quite impossible and the idea of a Myanmar-China railroad was often discussed after 1863 but it was dropped finally in 1901 because China's flow of outlet is towards the east. Mule tracks are enough for China's overland trade with Myanmar. But when the Chinese lost their coastline during the Sino-Japanese war, they found it necessary to open an outlet through Myanmar, thus the Myanmar Road was built in 1938. We have another motor-road from Kengtung of Eastern Shan State to Northern Thailand. We have no motor-roads leading to Malay nor to India. Tamu Khampat road and Ledo road were always in ruin. In internal communications there is the Ayeyawady river which is navigable for 900 miles and a Scottish company with 600 vessels did the carrying trade in the Ayeyawady. Mail steamers were capable of carrying 2500 passengers and they often had a bazaar on board. Myanmar Railways was 2060 miles long. It carried more passengers but less freight than the river steamer for most of the oil and rice reached Yangon by river. All-weather-motorable-roads are altogether 4100 miles long. Many more roads and railways should be constructed so that the conditions in the remote areas might improve.

Public Health

Since 1900 epidemic had fallen by half or two-thirds, yet expectation of life is short, death and birth rates are unbalanced, and the infant and maternal mortality are still very high. There were 315 hospitals and many dispensaries run by the government and European firms. The number of qualified person for medical service were as follows:

In 1931 there were 1,599 doctors of which 74 were Europeans; 936 nurses and 1513 midwives of which 170 were Europeans and the Myanma numbered half and the rest were Kayins and tribal. Two third of the doctors were Indians. Myanma nationals should be encouraged to enter the medical profession.

Education

Myanma had a high literacy percentage 72% of men and 22% of women were able to read and write Myanma. Because the Buddhist monks give free education. It is a remarkable achievement but it should not be exaggerated because it is only simple literacy. They know little of mathematics and nothing of modern science. The Myanma literary works has very little on non-Buddhistic themes and therefore there is not much reading material for most people who could read and write little. Monasteries are good primary schools, but are not adequate to give a suitable knowledge for an average citizen. Another difficulty with the Myanma is that the parents send their children to school only when they are young and when they become a little older, they are sent to work in the fields. There were 250 middle and high schools where English language is taught. There is no sex bar in the Myanma life and therefore most of the schools are co-educational. Most of the best schools were run by missionaries but they had unduly westernised the students

so that there was a lack of relation to real life. The school on the other hand failed to provide vocational education.

The University of Yangon

Yangon University was founded in 1920. Before that we have the Yangon College affiliated to the Calcutta University. Most of the graduates enlisted for law classes while they hunt for jobs. The government was unable to employ them all and therefore they formed a distinct class of educated unemployed and they served as leaders in the nationalist movement.

Land Problem and Agriculture

The government policy at first was to foster the peasant proprietorship, yet in the delta, the most advanced part of the country, 2/3 of all rice lands was held by non-resident-non-cultivating landlords and many of them were Indian money lenders. Thus rack-renting came into existence. Rents were increased year by year so that even a good cultivator had so little left after paying his rent and thus he could barely maintain his family at subsistence level until the next harvest. If his plough bullocks died he was literally helpless and must take money from the lender on whatever terms offered. The English Government failed to do any improvement in connection with this condition. In 1931 there was the world slump and cultivators of Myanma were heavily hit by this economic crisis. They had to give up their lands. 56% of land in the delta were owned by non-resident agriculturalists of whom nearly half were Chettyars. By 1937 Myanma was separated from India and so agriculture came under the management of a Myanma minister. To bring about improvements two acts were passed in 1939. The first one was to forbid the transfer of land to non-agriculturalists. The second one was an attempt to fix a fair rent of the land by a Revenue Court.

At the same time government issued general awards to relieve the cultivators from rack-renting. However, due to the inexperience of the officers and the corruption of their subordinates no real improvement was done. The main reason of the increase in agricultural debts was the lack of any Myanmar Bank to help the cultivators. Co-operative banking for farmers was once tried and failed helplessly. Apart from the Chettyars the peasants had to rely on Chinese pawnshops which run under periodical auctioning of the licence system and therefore, the licensee could not afford to work on a low margin. Rates of interest were very high (usurious). There were about 1600 Chettyar firms in Myanmar i.e. on the average of one Chettyar Office to every 5,000 people. Total agricultural indebtedness of Myanmar never fell below Rs. 625 millions and 4/5 of it was owed to the Chettyars.

The people looked upon the Chettyars as public enemy No.1. Actually the Chettyars were the most moderate of the money lenders. Government agricultural loans very seldom reach the villagers in full amount therefore it was a failure too. The Myanmar Government after separation of 1937 had no national debt except Rs. 35 million annuity to pay India for 45 years. This debt is for the expenses undertaken by the India Government to develop railways, telegraph, irrigation, roads, etc. in Myanmar. One fourth of the revenue came from the land. Foreigners gave half of the income tax, customs and excise. Most of the expenditure of that income was for the police and prison administration. A very few percentage was used on education, public health and agriculture. The annual revenue of Myanmar was Rs.167 million. Most of the firms in Myanmar were owned by foreigners and so foreign governments also get income tax on firms in Myanmar, and as the capital was foreign, the profits went abroad.

Trade

In 1824 a single 5000 ton ship could have carried the whole year's exports from Yangon. From that, it developed into 4 million tons a year. Yangon was the biggest port and almost all Myanma trade passed through it. Overland trade was almost negligible. From 7 million tons of rice produced every year $3\frac{1}{2}$ million tons were exported and $\frac{2}{3}$ of it went to India. The imports were in value only half of the exports. It is important to note that not all the imports of Myanma are manufactured goods nor all the exports of Myanma raw material because oil and silver were refined here before export and coal was imported. The articles imported range from motorcars to crockery, tinned-fish, needles and threads. Before the Second World War broke out, Myanma had some local manufactures although they were mostly foreign hands e.g. factories for cement and soap were owned by English, match factory by Swedish, aluminium ware, hosiery and rubber shoes by Indians, sugar by British and Indian and salt by the Chinese.

Myanma had a favourable trade balance because export was more than twice of import. But almost all trades and industries were owned by foreigners, so Myanma had little profit from it. Larger profit means larger remittance abroad. The absence of Myanma capital was not entirely due to poverty. Myanma were not accustomed to trade collectively as in incorporated limited companies. They found it more profitable to invest their surplus capital in money lending business. After 1918, the foreign capital became one of the causes for political agitation. Myanma had a high standard of living as compared to either Indians or Chinese but the discontent lies in the fact that they remained comparatively poor while the country became rich. Political agitations were made to eliminate this unhappy situation. Still Myanma failed to

improve themselves. Inland fisheries are entirely in the hands of the Myanmar and since 1923, a Myanmar minister was always in charge of it. But the government policy was to get only a good revenue out of it. So, short-term auction leases were made which prevented improvement and proper maintenance. It is very absurd to allow Myanmar import fish while the country has enough even to export. Another example is tobacco. There was enough to export it, but actually it was imported. Apart from this, almost every modern article in daily use had to be imported for lack of appropriate home industries. Perhaps the advertisement "Buy British" was so attractive in those days. Another reason is that Myanmar were no coal and iron and hydro-electric power is still in the dream. A predominantly agricultural country like Myanmar has a great promise in the future though it fails to mechanize itself because there is a great shortage of food in the world today and manufacture of articles are so numerous. We need only to try and improve our agriculture and produce more rice, etc.

The Chettyars in Myanmar had invested a capital of about Rs.780 million of which $\frac{2}{3}$ were in agriculture. There were also many Indian traders, industrialists, shipowners, shopkeepers and money lenders, etc. The Chinese capital was also enormous but exact figures are not available. There were many Chinese shopkeepers, miners, gardeners, carpenters, pawnbrokers, smugglers and gangsters operating largely gambling den and opium den. In Yangon they did big business like shipping and banking. In 1941, the Indo-Myanmar Trade Agreement was made. India was Myanmar's best foreign customer and before 1937, there was free trade between the two countries. Next to Japan India supplied cotton goods to Myanmar and it also took 60% of Myanmar export, especially large quantities of oil, teak and rice. By this treaty the tariff war between

India and Myanmar begun. Myanmar imposed Rs.10½ million as duties on exports to India. There were many strained relations between the two countries and as a result there arose many anti-Indian riots in Myanmar.

Indian Minority in Myanmar

There were about one million Indians in Myanmar and this Indian community caused an acute social problem in the country. After all, it was one of the many unhappy creations of the British in Myanmar. They had encouraged the Indian migration into Myanmar with a view to develop the paddy fields of lower Myanmar with Indian capital and labour. But Myanmar on the other hand hate these Indians in spite of the fact that Myanmar have had a great deal of cultural debt to India. Myanmar, however, looked upon them with much contempt as the camp-followers of the British. In matters of intermarriage, Myanmar women were at a great disadvantage as the Indian Personal Law, either Hindu or Mohammedan, does not give an equal right to the wife as a Myanmar would give. A Myanmar wife of an Indian will be left penniless when her husband dies if Indian marriage rituals are not followed at the time of her marriage.

It was only in 1939 that "the Myanmar Women's Marriage Act" was passed so that any Myanmar wife of a foreigner may be protected by her personal law. Apart from this social problem the Indians outsmart Myanmar in trade and industry as well as in most of the government services. They had a couple of centuries start over Myanmar. They monopolised the professions like legal, medical, accountancy, engineering, etc. They also took the lead in money-lending, and wholesale and retail trades. In average, 250,000 Indians came over to Myanmar every year and in 1927 the number of incoming Indians increased to 428,000. Most of them returned

after two or three years stay in Myanmar but a large minority of them decided to settle in Myanmar. Thus the number of Indians permanently living here has increased steadily. The remittance home of these Indians averaged Rs.70 million every year. At first Myanmar were very much thankful to the Indians as they did all the heavy and dirty works which an average Myanmar did not like to do when life was easy with them. But when life became difficult, they found it too hard to compete with the cheap Indian labour. As a result there was deep resentment for all Indians which eventually led to anti-Indian riots. One in 1930 killed 120 Indians and wounded 900 in Yangon alone and another in 1937 which was widespread throughout the country. Since 1941, all Indians coming into Myanmar must have passports. This and many other Myanmar threats on Indian interests in Myanmar created a great problem which was put to an end only by the outbreak of the World War II.

The Constitutional Progress

Up to 1862, "Burma was governed by post from Calcutta" in view of the fact that the Commissioner at Bago had to report anything of importance concerning his province to the Governor-General at Calcutta and he had to do what he was ordered from there. A daily post to Sittwe was established in 1826 and local initiative was discouraged. In 1862, a governor was appointed at Yangon and from 1862 to 1923, there were eighteen governors at Yangon and only the last two came direct from England who had had parliamentary experience. The rest were I.C.S. men of whom only four had served in Myanmar before. Until 1897, all laws for Myanmar were made in India. Thus, we can safely imagine that Myanmar was ruled as if he were an Indian although the people of these two countries differed greatly. There cannot be a happy adjustment though there may be some practical

solution to administration problems. In 1897, the Governor of Myanma was given a legislative council of thirty members of which half were natives but all were nominated with officers in the majority. The country was governed by a strong bureaucracy of which all top ranks were filled with Englishmen. The people had no share of whatever nature in the making of law until 1923 when the first semblance of a parliament appeared.

The Dyarchy 1923-1937

Dyarchy means the government by two independent authorities- the officialdon and the people, and it goes without saying that the people has only a minor share in the determining of policy. This peculiar system was the result of Montagu-Chelmsford proposals. The Montford report suggested "A Rule of Two" or "Dyarchy" and that proposal was applied in Indian provinces in 1921. At first Myanma was left behind considering it still unfit for this little improvement even. But after two years struggle we got it with some modifications.

According to that Dyarchy, Myanma shall have a single chamber legislature of 103 members of which 80 will be elected. Myanma had the majority in these eighty seats but the distribution of seats were in such a manner that a single Myanma political party could not have the control of the House without the support of foreign community representatives who were undoubtedly pro-British. Governmental functions were divided into two groups, one of real importance and another of lesser importance. Technically the first or the really important group was called "the Reserved Subjects" and the second was called " the Transferred Subjects". Myanma who could control the legislative house will be made members of the Governor's Council and all of them have to

manage "the transferred subjects. Two other members of the Governor's Council controlled the Reserved Subjects.

The Reserved Subjects were:

- (1) Law and Order,
- (2) Revenue and Finance,
- (3) Irrigation, and
- (4) Major bureaucracy in charge of general administration.

The Transferred Subjects were:

- (1) Local Government,
- (2) Education,
- (3) Public Health,
- (4) Agriculture,
- (5) Excise,
- (6) Public Works and
- (7) Forest

Two members who controlled the Reserved subjects (one was a Myanma) were only responsible to the Governor. Two Myanma members of the Transferred Subjects were responsible to the Legislative Council. Members of the Reserved Subjects controlled the finance and had had the first claim on it for their own departments. So members of the Transferred Subjects found it impossible to do large-scale reforms involving heavy expenditure on education and public health, which were of vital importance in building a nation. So, this change in the constitution was only a small change. The importance of the change was not the change in itself but its opening of the way for bigger changes that were to follow.

The Local Government

District Councils were introduced in 1923 on basis of local self-government. In municipalities, civil officers acted as Chairman before 1923 but now all were made entirely elective. In all Myanma there were only twenty four places big enough to be called towns, but there were fifty eight municipalities. More than half had under ten thousand inhabitants and less than Rs.97 thousand yearly income. The taking away of civil officers from municipalities was good for some places. Tax payers themselves controlled the municipal and a series of genuine improvements were made for their own towns. But in general, it proved bad. The Chairman and the members of the municipal were found to be very corrupt. The worst was at Mandalay although it had a population of 140,000 and a large enough staff to work properly if they were willing. We have the similar story with twenty eight District Councils. It is not because Myanma are inherently corrupt or unable to run a show. They organised pagoda festivities with success and with almost no corruption. The reason is that Myanma are not politically minded to work for our own good through these popular institutes. England, for example: had about a thousand years' experience in this type of local administration. But when that system was transplanted in Myanma where the social background and tradition was totally different from that of England, it failed helplessly.

Anyhow, Myanma have to learn it, modify it and adjust it to their setting so that it will be a success in the near future. The story of the Yangon municipality is quite different. In Yangon more than half the population was Indian who paid 55% of the taxes while Myanma formed one third of the population and paid only 11% of the taxes. So, the management went to the foreigners and therefore it was moderately efficient. But in later years, Myanma deman-

ded the control claiming that the city was their capital and when their demand was granted, the rotation system of appointing mayors among different races was stopped. That brought ultimately the present day deficiencies in electric supply, water supply, street scavenging, sewage works.

The 1931 Rebellion

The cause of the rebellion, when reduced to most simplest terms, was due to the growing poverty among peasants through the change from a primitive economy to a commercial economy. There was a rise in nationalism with a flair to blame the alien rule for all troubles. There were many such rebellions before but they were not as widespread and strong as this 1931 rebellion. The world slump also hit hard the cultivators of Myanmar in that same year after about two months of the outbreak of the rebellion and therefore financially and socially grieved people joined in. Then, political agitators took it up and as such within three months of the rebellion, it became a challenge that decried against the British administrators for their huge taxations in times of world slump and a wild cry for "Home Rule". It lasted for more than a year and spread to twelve out of forty districts. It required one Indian division to stop it. There was a total casualty of thirty nine on the government side, Nine thousand prisoners were taken of which one thousand got heavy penalties and one hundred and twenty eight were hanged. From beginning to end, it was a sorrowful movement. The rebels had only swords save the charms they bore which they believed to be gun-proof. There was no proper organisation nor able leadership. When caught one betrayed against another. It had not the slightest hope of success from the very start and it was most thoroughly crushed. Yet it had one good and lasting effect. It increased the political consciousness of the people.

Seperation from India

It was a mistake from the very beginning to treat Myanma a part of India. Myanma, with distinct national fruits is obviously a nation in itself. On the other hand Myanma had resented the union with India inspite of the fact that it still owes and respects much the Indian culture. But in 1932 election which was to decide either for or against the union, the separationists failed. Actually it was just a political manoeuvre as a strong group of Myanma leaders were of the opinion that India was on its peaceful way to the Dominion Status and if Myanma were separated at this juncture, it might be left behind when India gets the Dominion Status. So, the British made the judgement against the real sentiment of the people and decided for separation in 1937. A new constitution for Myanma was made and put into operation and thereby the Dyarchy form of government came to an end. Unemployment problem became serious in that year. All big business was in foreign hands and for that, press and platform blamed the government. Rightly or wrongly agitators asserted that the government was responsible for the growing poverty of the people.

The 1937 Constitution

The 1935 Government of India Act displaced Dyarchy with a complete cabinet. This act was extended to Myanma as well in 1937. But powers invested in the Myanma parliament were wider than these of any other Indian province. According to this 1937 Constitution, there were to be two houses of legislature, viz., the Senate and the House of Representatives. The Senate had thirty six members of whom half were elected and half nominated and it could be always overridden by the lower house. The House of Representatives had one hundred and thirty two members who were all to be

elected. There were special constituencies also for industrial labourers, for chambers of Commerce and for racial minorities. Myanmar members constituted 72% of the whole house. The Cabinet had six to nine ministers appointed by the Governor on the advice of the Premier who could have the support of the House of Representatives. The Governor had two counsellors and a financial adviser. When the war broke out in 1940, he had an additional counsellor for defence. The Governor alone was responsible for

- (1) foreign affairs,
- (2) defence,
- (3) currency and
- (4) the excluded areas.

The Governor was also empowered to override the parliament in matters gravely effecting the peace and tranquility, the financial stability, the rights of minorities, the services, racial and commercial discrimination.

Many of the British unwritten parliamentary conventions like the freedom of speech, the freedom of arrest, etc. were copied in the constitution. The franchise was wide. Males of eighteen years and above, females of twenty one years and above, subject to a literacy test were allowed to vote. The electorate and nearly three million people which is 24% of the total population (12% in India and 71% in England) and about two third of this electorate turned up to vote on the polling day.

The Excluded Areas means the land of the Shans, Kachins, Chins and Karennis and they were completely under the control of the Governor. The legislature has no say regarding them. Following figures will illustrate their extent and population in comparison with Myanmar proper.

Parliamentary Myanma	- 149,000 sq.miles (57%)
	12.3 million people (84%)
Excluded Areas	- 113,000 sq.miles (43%)
	2.4 million people (16%)
All Myanma	- 262,000 sq.miles (100)
	15 million people (100)

Myanma Kings never extended their rule over these hilly places except the Shan States. Usually, there was only a nominal Suzerain and Shan Sawbwas were Kings in subordinate alliance with their overlord, the Myanma King. Other hilly tracts were left to themselves, except that occasionally Myanma armies marched through them. Hill tribes are illiterate except the Shans who are Buddhists and have their own literature. Christian missionaries worked their way among these hill people and invented writings for their languages with Roman alphabets. They also helped the Karens to acquire knowledge for writing their language with Myanma alphabets as the Shans has done before them:

Brief Political Survey, 1937-1942,

Since the inauguration of the 1937 Constitution, Myanma ministers had an increasingly larger share in the control of the home affairs. But they were found to be rather inefficient in carrying out the duties given to them. They were, of course, desirous to serve well their country but they were inexperienced and the people of the electorate in support of them were still very ignorant of democratic principles. The majority of the young educated people had a fervent desire to join the government service rather than the political arena. Political parties were centred around personalities so that there was no happy growth of political party under strong principles. Parties were mere loose combinations of followers around some popular figures and they had no distinct programmes. In times of election, all parties said almost the

same thing, i.e. the promise for the betterment of the people, the race, and the Religion.

During the five years from April 1937 when the new constitution came into force to March 1942 when the Japanese took over the land, there were four ministries; each ministry was just a reshuffling of much the same-pack. The lifetime of the Parliament was five years and during that five years, the story of the Parliament was nothing but the story of squabble for office. The deterioration in the service was also alledged to be the result of undue influence exercised by the Ministers. It was said that officers had to pay to get or avoid transfer. There was a growing unrest in the whole land. Agitators, especially Thakins, over-emphasised on anti-foreignism. Nationalism was much agitated though there were some evidences that communist ideas were also creeping in. Workers of oil plants and dockyards formed themselves into Trade Unions and demanded higher wages, shorter hours, etc., for their general amelioration. There were many workers' strikes. Sometimes the industrial workers were joined by students in anti-imperialist movements. The students said that they could not sit idle when their parents were starving. The troubles came to a climax in 1938-39. In July 1938, a racial riot occurred again that killed two hundred Indians, wounded seven hundred and fifty and destroyed Rs.3½ million worth of property. Oil field workers from Yenangyaung and Chauk marched down to Yangon to ask for their demands direct from the ministers at the Secretariat Buildings. The students launched a sympathetic strike for these workers and in a demonstration on 20 December 1938, one student was killed and many injured by the Yangon police. Strikes spread like wild fire throughout Myanmar and in February 1939, troops fired on 15,000 demonstrators at Mandalay killing fourteen. In the meantime, the European war broke out (September 1939) which had an effect of

quietness on the Myanmar politics for a short while. But some political leaders were quick in seizing the opportunity and popularize the slogan of "England's difficulties were our opportunities". Some looked forward for outside help and found Japan, the elder brother of Asia promising the younger brothers freedom and prosperity. They really believed that the Japanese meant good for all of us. In the meanwhile the Asiatic War broke out (23 December 1941) and the Japanese occupied Yangon in March 1942.

chapter ~ four

The Japanese Occupation of Myanma

It is largely attributable to their surprising adeptness to the art of jungle warfare that the Japanese military victory over Myanma was so quickly done in early 1942. The defense of Myanma depended greatly on the British ability to hold Singapore and other sea approaches under the assumption that Japan would never be able to come over by land from Thai and China through mountainous jungles. It was a complete surprise that came from Thai and penetrated Myanma from various points. The British tactic was to maintain the main arteries of transport in consideration of the impossibility of a mechanized army to move about without them. But the Japanese avoided direct frontal attacks and outflanked the British defenses by jungle marches cutting the rear lines of communications. For the immediate danger of being bottled-up in Myanma, the British were forced to do what they called "the Glorious Retreat" which was, of course, a pell-mell withdrawal from Myanma into India.

Myanma volunteers helped the Japanese as guides for the flanking manoeuvres. Local incendiaries also harried the British and Chinese rear. Some partisans of the Dobama Asiayon ("We Myanma" Association) or Thakin Party (Masters' or Lords' Party claiming that it is not the Britishers but the Myanma are real masters in Myanma) and some students

under Thakin influence sided with the Japanese with a strong believe that the big brother had appeared to help his younger brother to free himself from the shackles of the British. The British forces received no effective assistance from the Myanmar though even with such a help, the final result might invariably be the same. The invasion started in January 1942 and was completed in May when the rains came.

Character of The Japanese Occupation

The conquest of Myanmar was not an end in itself but only a step in the elimination of the British from all south Asian countries and so India was the goal. The Japanese planned to march up to Delhi. As part of this design, Japan must have all available men and material support from Myanmar. The Myanmar nationalist spirit must be appeased first. On 1 August 1943, Myanmar was made an independent state and as a pledge to help in the economic development of the country it was included in the Greater East Asia Co-prosperity Sphere which was a camouflage name for the Japanese economic penetration and exploitation in all Asiatic countries. Dr Ba Maw was made Adipati-Head of the New State and Myanmar declared war on the United Kingdom and the United States of America.

The Japanese used Myanmar for home defense and police duties and were never sent to the front. The Burma(Myanmar) Independence Army (B.I.A) was given a new name the Burma (Myanmar) Defense Army (B.D.A) and it was proof enough that Myanmar independence was only a name. For the Indian Campaign, the Japanese organized the Indian National Army under Subhas Chandra Bose. I.N.A. personals were to be used as instruments for suborning front-line Indian soldiers under the British. All traces of brotherliness, comradeship and sincere promises to help the

Japanese had disappeared even in the early months of the occupation. They were new masters, more forward in their demands and more cruel in their exaction of payment. The feeling of goodwill and happiness had changed into hostility and fear.

The Communist faction of the Thakin party and some die-hard nationalists secretly propagated the insincerity and the atrocities of the Japanese and organised a popular resistance movement. Anti-Japanese feelings were largely stimulated by the cruelty of the Japanese military police (Kempeitai). The Japanese soldiers also displayed flagrant disrespect for village elders and Buddhist monks and they infuriated Myanma by slapping the faces of all who failed to cooperate promptly. Whenever they wanted food they never hesitated to lay hands upon the poultry, and pigs and oxen of the peasants. Chway Tat (Sweat Army) demanded thousands of men for works on the Thai railway, on airfields, revetments and other military installations. It was really a forced labour and large percentage of these people never returned to their homes. The Japanese military currency flooded the markets that it was almost a rubbish.

The initial plan to invade India in 1942 failed but the final desperate effort of the Japanese in late 1944 to invade East Bengal and Manipur and to cut the supply line of General Stilwell's North Myanma operation came perilously near succeeding. Only airpower saved the beleaguered British Indian garrisons at Imphal. With this failure, the Japanese military strength collapsed in Myanma. The two months' campaign of reconquest of Myanma was started in early 1945. The Burma(Myanmar) National Army (last name for B.I.A) under Thakin Aung San, Minister of Defense, turned on the retreating Japanese. This action assisted the early British

recovery of Yangon and made possible the trapping of a considerable portion of the Japanese army operating north and west of the city.

Effects of The Japanese Occupation

The Japanese occupation had a heavy toll on Myanmar. The physical destruction was enormous. Many towns including Yangon and Mandalay and roads and railways connecting them were partly or wholly destroyed. Transport facilities by rail and river were heavily damaged. Houses that escaped bombing or military requisition lost all furnishings and movable fixtures during evacuations. British-owned industrial facilities in minerals, oil, rice, timber and cement were effectively sabotaged before retreat of the British troops so that the Japanese could not use them. Losses in the rural areas were also heavy. Paddy lands lay waste; the cattle died in epidemic or slaughtered by soldiers; the clothing of the cultivators wore out; the surplus rice unsalable; and agricultural implements lacking. Production dropped to a subsistence level and rents and taxes were ignored. But one advantage for the poor was in places of varied agricultural crops, cultivators were able to pay off their debts in cheap military currency. On the social side the losses were serious. Respect for property rights and police authority almost disappeared. Violent crime and dacoity increased as fire arms were abundant. Education was largely neglected. The people suffered heavily from malaria. Epidemics of smallpox, cholera and plague were checked only by drastic preventive measures of the Japanese.

On the other side, nationalism was stimulated greatly during the Japanese occupation. The people were impatient of enduring any more foreign rule. The year 1944 saw the secret formation of Anti-Fascist Organisation or Peoples' Front which later developed into The Anti-Fascist Peoples'

Freedom League (AFPFL) which was an amalgam of a number of anti-Japanese youth groups. AFPFL constituted the only organised political group in the country at the end of the war. Its leadership, particularly General Aung San and the Communist leader Than Tun (Aung San's brother-in-law) was acknowledged to be far more honest and patriotic than the elder statesmen of prewar vintage had been. Unfortunately, very few of them had administrative experience and large military following of Aung San was more adventurous than sagacious. The atmosphere of disregard for rules and regulations of the war years continued to exist and the administrative efficiency was at its low ebb. To restore governmental authority was a very hard problem while the Communist faction of the AFPFL was on the slogan of "No Rent, No Tax". But it was the policy to keep things in a state of stable equilibrium to bring pressure on the British to withdraw from Myanma. But when the British went away it was still more a graver problem to restore order and discipline so that a stable political community might come into existence.

chapter ~ five

Myanma Post War Problems

Reconstruction, Rehabilitation and Relief

Myanma government-in-exile remained at Simla and planned for economic rehabilitation, etc. when the country was reconquered, under three broad principles.

- (1) To restore law and order and to restore essential economic activities by an extended period of military rule.
- (2) To employ the assistance of technical experts from British firms which had connection with Myanma before because the Myanma have no adequate capital resources and technical skill.
- (3) To postpone the nationalist objectives at least for a decade until the essential requirements of economic recovery are attained.

All works to be done were assigned under various "project units like railway project, highways project, river traffic project, oil project, timber project, agricultural project, etc. and each project must hire competent personnel to direct. Profits of the projects must go to the government. The British parliament authorised a non-interest-bearing credit of some £ 87 million for Myanma's recovery. This project scheme was not considered acceptable by the Myanma. The economic

future of the country should not be done without the participation of the people in it. Five months of military rule under General Sir Hubert Rance accomplished very little in way of recovery. In October 1945, Governor Sir Reginald Dorman-Smith took over the administration from the civil affairs branch of the army. The disorderly conditions throughout the land hampered him from doing any improvement. The government's cancellation of all Japanese-issued currency left most village cultivators without funds. Political tension increased when the Governor insisted on putting selected Anglophile Myanmar into his executive council and rejected the sweeping demands of the AFPFL. It became worse when a rival to AFPFL was encouraged to develop under some Thankins and U Saw. Dorman Smith left Myanmar in June 1946 and the project schemes for economic recovery collapsed, giving way to more important political demands. In August, Rance returned as the new civilian governor.

On the March to Independence

It was during this month of August, 1947 that Nehru was made head of an Interim Nationalist Government in India. The British were ready to carry out the same policy in Myanmar. In September 1947, Aung San's group was invited enbloc into the Governor's Executive Council, partly as the result of a threatening of strike situation in Yangon at that time. It had saved the country from disaster of a new strife and warfare. Another reason of the British for becoming so ready for negotiations was the fact that the Communists were excluded from the high offices of the AFPFL during the summer of 1946 for reasons of using the league's facilities for party ends. As head of the new executive council, Aung San quickly ended the general strike threat and when the

Communists renewed their strike agitation in mid-October, they were promptly excluded from the ranks of the League.

Aung San's policy of negotiation was severely criticised by the Communists and some of Aung San's own veterans' group, the Peoples' Volunteer Organisation (PVO). Negotiations for speedy settlement were made amidst increasing threats for revolutionary violence throughout Myanma and the British made promise to grant self-government within a year. The April 1947 election for the Constituent Assembly returned 190 leaguers out of a total of 220 seats. But the revolutionary ferment in the country was increasing all the more stronger. In spite of his personal prestige and recent victories in the negotiations, Aung San was unable to stop it. Negotiations came to an end in August 1947 but the terms were kept unpublished until October. On July 19, 1947 Aung San and six of his colleagues were assassinated and it dealt a staggering blow to the Myanma Government under AFPFL. Rance's prompt announcement in selecting Thakin Nu, vice president of AFPFL as Aung San's successor saved the situation a great deal. But Nu's government had to wrestle with tasks of increasing difficulty as AFPFL showed some sign of defection. Some efforts were made to bring about a compromise with the Communists under Than Tun so that various leftist political groups might have a united stand against a not impossible revolution of the reactionary elements. But negotiation broke down when the Nu-Atlee Agreement was signed on 17, October 1947.

It was agreed that Myanma would be recognised as a full independent sovereign state from 4 January 1948 and to be known as the Republic of the Union of Myanma and there was no objection to the proposed Socialist tendencies in the constitution for new republic. But one thing

deplorable, as viewed by the Communists, was that "except in emergency situations and within the limits of Socialist objectives as set forth in Myanmar's constitution, Nu agreed that the Myanmar government would seek through prior consultation a mutually satisfactory settlement covering any action which was prejudicial to British interests". Three-year Defense Agreement that followed in 29 August 1948 virtually meant that Myanmar would be placed for at least three years within the sphere of British security operations in South-east Asia. Possibilities of future ruptures with India for property claims of Indians in Myanmar and with China for frontier disputes might have strongly influenced the Myanmar government in the negotiations.

The Drift Toward Confusion

The Communists and some political groups, strongly opposed the Nu-Atlee Agreement. PVOs were also of the opinion that Nu had unnecessarily accorded the British military protection and promised respects to the British economic interests. The Communists, strictly in accordance with their party principles demanded complete severance from all British connections and such a bondage as Nu had recently agreed upon was highly objectionable and totally undesirable. The independence was reduced to a sham. As a result the Communist Party became an unlawful association and the PVO was outlawed in March 1948. They were driven into open rebellion. By midsummer of 1948 Nu's government lost control over important areas of central Myanmar. Communications between Yangon and Mandalay were completely cut off. In July, two battalions of the army joined the rebels. The government was to depend entirely upon the Kayin, Chin and Kachin contingents of the army. By September 1948 for-

eign press described the government as the "Yangon Government" because it practically had control only over Yangon. The Kayin under Saw Ba U Gyi formed the Karen National Defense Organisation (K.N.D.O) and helped the government against the Communists at first. But on issue of the demand for a separate Kayin State comprising some part of the delta and Taninthayi, there occurred a difference of opinion which eventually led the K.N.D.Os. to rebel.

By September 1948, the gloomy outlook was intensified by the assassination of U Tin Tut, one able but conservative element of the AFPFL leaders. The paralysis on the national economy and the administrative machine had almost done success to the rebels' cause.

Economic Problems

The most important problem was to restore Lower Myanmar's rice production to the old standard, when 3½ million tons were available for export. Cultivators must have money and other incentive materials for cultivations and the government provided loans for them and so in 1948, 1,200,000 tons were available for export. In the meanwhile the government took monopoly of rice export which brought in an enormous profit. But only one quarter of the loans were repaid and the collection of land tax was very incomplete. The Peasants' Unions (Communist-sponsored) went on "No Rent, No Tax" campaigns and to counter act them, the government decreed that no rent should be more than twice the tax of any land and even this could not compete with the sweeping offer of the communists and on the other hand this measure alienated the landlords who were supporting the government before. The government took up the readjustment of land ownership problem and so much political favouritism shown

by officials in charge of the operation caused intense dissatisfaction. Chettyar lands constituted another major problem. Confiscating them without compensation was the popular demand but the government found it difficult as it might result in a strained relation with the Indian government. It was also not in a position to pay the compensation. Land nationalization might also injure the Myanmar landlords. But they were so few and weak that they could not create any situation to save themselves from losing their private holdings. In the contest between the government and the Communists, the land policy might determine the issue and whoever has a better policy might win the allegiance of the Myanmar villagers. On industry, the government policy was socialization too. In 1948, the Ayeyarwady Flotilla Company was taken over and extensive inroads were made in the timber industry. Foreign firms are functioning at present only on a marking-time basis. Nothing can be done until when there is peace and tranquility. The government went on a programme of "peace within one year" in 1950, "Stable government within one year in 1951 and "Pyidawtha" (Welfare State) in 1952, but these terms carry mocking implications as the situation does not prove so healthy.

The Constitution of 1948

It was approved in 1947 to come into force on 1 April 1948. According to it, Myanmar is to become a republic as well as federal union of Myanmar proper with the Shan, the Chin, the Kachin, the Kayah and the Kayin States in it. These composite states have the right of severance after ten years of the inauguration of the constitution and the inviolability of the rights of the minorities is explicitly guaranteed. There is to be a bicameral legislature of the Chamber of Deputies to represent the people and the Chamber of

Nationalities to represent all indigenous races. Of 125 members in the Chamber of Nationalities, the non-Myanma indigenous people have seventy two members. This virtually means that the minorities are given self-rule except that they are members to the Union of Myanma. In franchise, all adult citizens irrespective of race, sex, colour or creed, over 18 are allowed to vote. A population of 10,000 to 20,000 voters formed one constituency and approximately there will be 250 members in the Chamber of Deputies. The Prime Minister and his Cabinet are responsible to this Chamber. Both Chambers can initiate legislation and in case of difference of opinion, both Chambers must sit jointly and decide the issue by a majority vote. The combined Chambers are to elect the President for five years, whose office is simply ceremonial and ornamental just like the British Monarch. The Prime Minister is the real executive. The aims of the state are professedly of a Socialist Programme and thus the socialization of land and industry in the near future would follow. Development of Myanma's resources must be carried out by companies in which at least 60% of the capital must be Myanma. This restriction is absurd for the time being. The Supreme Court has the power of final interpretation on the Constitution and the judges of the court are not subject to legislative interference and are removable only on grounds of misconduct or incapacity. The Constitution guarantees all the characteristic freedoms of any other democratic states except that in matters of private ownership for productive property, the right of the State is paramount.

Than Tun
 5 September 1994

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